

**HISTORIC COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**  
**January 27, 2016**  
8:10 p.m.

<u>ATTENDANCE:</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<u>Phyllis Angelo</u>	X	
<u>Mary Donohue</u>	X	
<u>Judi Sussman</u>		X
<u>Sara Theresa Bartelloni</u>		X
<u>Mike Ginch</u>	X	
<u>Joan Kristan</u>		X
<u>Eric Model</u>	X	
<u>Liaison Vito Acquafredda</u>	X	

AUDIENCE: Mayor Mignone

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Questioned the Mayor if there was a new Planner for the Borough and what the Planner will be doing for the Borough.

**MAYOR:** Indicated there is a new Planner for COAH, Redevelopment and for the Planning Board.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Stated the Historic Component of the Master Plan was passed with the former Planner in June.

**MAYOR:** Advised there were deficiencies in the process and the new Planning Board Attorney will review that to make sure there were not fatal defects under law so it will not have to be done again.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Stated they need to be advised of the status of the Historic Component, because as a CLG they need to send yearly reports to Trenton.

**MAYOR:** Advised it would not change the document, just procedurally whether it would be deemed acceptable.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Questioned who the Planning Board Attorney is.

**MAYOR:** Stated it is Brian Chewkowskie, who has extensive experience in Planning and Zoning.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Advised a designation hearing was done in 2012 and would like to know how to proceed with that designation, as the designation did not go any further than the Planning Board. Stated Trenton will cause some problems as the Commission has not designated a house that is on the National and State Registry. Advised the Historic Component of the Master Plan would make the Planning Board aware of the houses that are historically designated and would send a "red flag" when the homeowners come before them to request a variance for work to be done on the home.

**VITO ACQUAFREDDA:** Stated residential does not come to the Planning Board, it goes to the Zoning Office or Building Dept. and if no variances are involved they can get a permit.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Indicated the Zoning Board should also get the Historic Component as well, so they are aware of what is happening.

**MAYOR:** Stated that unless someone knows of the significance of the historic designation of their home, or if there is a benefit to their home being designated, what good is the designation.

**MIKE GINCH:** Indicated he may be correct, but do you designate the home to promote the property and to make people aware of it, which is secondary to protecting the historical building.

**ERIC MODEL:** Stated there is a broader issue of the designation, in terms of passing on to the next generation the story of the town. Indicated the priority of the Commission is digitizing the pictures and bringing it into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and the protection of properties.

**MARY DONOHUE:** Advised the property where Chase Bank is currently, should have been a historic home as it was a stop on the Underground Railroad.

**MIKE GINCH:** Stated the house in Spring Valley Avenue is recognized on the National and State Registry, it is not just a River Edge issue.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Stated she believes Town Councils worry that many houses are going to be designated, however there are very few houses that rise to the level of designation. The Spring Valley House is the only other house in River Edge that is on the National and State Registry besides the homes at New Bridge Landing.

**MIKE GINCH:** Stated as a citizen whose has been here for a long time, there is a narrative and story line that ties it together, as it provides a sense of who we are and distinguishes the town from Oradell, Hackensack, New Milford and Teaneck, and also the legacy of River Edge.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Advised the other house they wanted to designate, the homeowner was a member of the historic Commission and does not have a problem with the designation.

**MAYOR:** Advised they do not have the authority to give tax breaks.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Stated they were told by Trenton that they can give tax breaks.

**VITO ACQUAFREDDA:** Questioned what the next step is on the Commission to restart the process.

**MAYOR:** Advised since the homeowner objected to the designation, you need 5 out of 6 votes to get the approval to designate. Stated the Commission had the opportunity when it did the first designations to include these 2 houses and the choice was not to do it at that time.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Stated they were asked by New Bridge Landing to designate those first homes.

**MAYOR:** Questioned if this house is the “cream of the crop,” why wasn’t it included in the first group.

**MIKE GINCH:** Questioned why the past is relevant, whether it was a mistake or oversight. Stated there is not much to deny this house is as relevant as any house in the town will ever be, besides the Steuben House.

**VITO ACQUAFREDDA:** Stated he believes it would help if there was some type of compensation to the homeowner, such as money, otherwise he does not think this house designation will get any further.

**MARY DONOHUE:** Questioned if the homeowner was holding out for money.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Stated there are many houses that are designated in Bergen County and the homeowners do not get compensated, so why set a precedent.

**VITO ACQUAFREDDA:** Stated this is the only other house worth saving and questioned what precedent would be set. Indicated he believes a formal presentation should be made to the Council, as some members may be new to the Council.

**MAYOR:** Stated it has come up before, but you can bring it up again.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Stated Town Councils do approve designations even though homeowners do not want the designation.

**MIKE GINCH:** Stated it is up to the Town Council if they want to take that position against the homeowner.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Indicated there is a need to make a decision between balancing individual property rights and protecting an important historic property. Advised Mike and Sara were working on the computer component of the Grant and questioned if they have all the data that was sent to the NJ Digital Highway.

**MIKE GINCH:** Advised there were some procedural bumps along the way but everything was done and they were satisfied.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Advised they received a satisfactory letter from the State Commission indicating they approved everything and believes the Town was paid for the money they put out for the Grant. Stated the Grant was for \$19,000, but the Commission only used \$9,000 as the State took 3 months to decide how they wanted the Commission to proceed.

**MARY DONOHUE:** Stated she would still ask them for the full amount of the Grant.

**MAYOR:** Indicated they usually would give an extension.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Advised Alan asked for an extension and they would not give one.

**MAYOR:** Stated you should write a letter and ask them to reconsider. Advised to give him the report that was written on the Grant and he will write a letter.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Advised the County, at the same time, were doing historic documents for every single town and forwarded all the documents they had on River Edge. Indicated they would like to continue with the project, even though they do not have the Grant money, as there is more to do.

**MAYOR:** Questioned what is involved in the process.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** The material is identified by the Commission and Mr. Carter, the professional, archivist entered the material into a central base. Using a program he developed.

**MIKE GINCH:** Stated the hardest part is identifying the material and identifying key words that can be researched.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Indicated Daragh has asked in this year's budget for one of the rooms in the library to be a configured for historic room, which would be secured.

**MIKE GINCH:** Advised the Library Board was very interested in having that done.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Stated historic information was not in one location and people were not able to do any research.

**MARY DONOHUE:** Stated a lot of materials were destroyed.

**MIKE GINCH:** Indicated his big concern was securing all the documents and then to identify the documents, which correlates with the house designation.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Advised they are not done with the process, but the process is started and is in a central location. Indicated there are minutes of 1894 that need to be scanned and someone needs to be hired that can read that script.

**ERIC MODEL:** Stated there are pictures in his parent's attic that eventually he would like to donate.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Advised the Borough will place a mailbox in the Borough if residents want to donate items.

**MAYOR:** Stated there will be an area in the New Bridge Landing Museum dedicated to River Edge where there could be displays of historic items.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Stated the budget for 2016 includes 70 hours for the archivist and 50 hours for the assistant, which comes to a total of \$4,600.00.

**MAYOR:** Questioned what the 70 hours would get the Commission.

**MIKE GINCH:** Stated you can only make a correlation as to what has been done already.

**MAYOR:** Questioned what the focus was going to be on.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Advised they were going to ask the public for donations.

**MAYOR:** Questioned how much time do you really need.

**ERIC MODEL:** Stated Mr. Carter indicated it was endless the work he could do.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Stated some work takes longer than others.

**MIKE GINCH:** Stated since Mr. Carter is retired, he indicated he can get more work completed.

**MAYOR:** Stated if you can get more done under this calendar year under a larger budget, that is something that should be considered.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Stated she was going to ask the public to donate documents, as that is how the Cultural Center received a lot of their documents. Advised they are also working on oral histories. Questioned Mary if Kevin would be willing do a workshop.

**MARY DONOHUE:** Indicated Kevin said he would try to accommodate the Commission.

**PHYLLIS ANGELO:** Stated they have one vacancy on the Commission if anyone knows of someone who may be interested.

**MIKE GINCH:** Stated the person should be willing to do some work.

**Next meeting February 24<sup>th</sup>**