

HISTORIC COMMISSION
MINUTES
February 22, 2011
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>Peter Sussman</u>	X	
<u>Yoshi Aono</u>	X	
<u>Sara Theresa Bartelloni</u>	X	
<u>Steve Cordts</u>	X	
<u>Sandy Moscaritolo</u>	X	

PHYLLIS ANGELO: Swearing in of Member Steve Cordts. A letter to Vince D'Amore thanking him for his 12 years of service on the River Edge Historic Commission was read into the record. I was hoping the Council would do something for him.

SANDY MOSCARITOLO: Traditionally the Mayor gives a Proclamations and Honorary Certificates. You can ask the Mayor if she would do a Proclamation.

MARY DONOHUE: I second that. He was invaluable when we tried to get the CLG.

PHYLLIS ANGELO: I have not applied to get the CLG this year, as it changed from "no matching" and money is tight this year. Kevin Wright does not make many meetings, as we could use his expertise as part of the CLG. When a designation is made, it is more expertise than we have on the Commission.

MARY DONOHUE: Kevin Wright is the Secretary of the Historical New Bridge Landing and also on the Board of the Bergen County Historical Society.

PHYLLIS ANGELO: Background on the new members, Steve Cordts, Sara Theresa Bartelloni and Sandy Moscaritolo and introduction of the remaining members, Mary Donohue, Yoshi Aono, Judi Sussman and Phyllis Angelo. Kevin Wright was instrumental in helping with passing the Ordinance for the Historic Committee.

We are currently finishing the historical display in the train station, so the Town can be aware of what we done. I would like to ask Sara to help with mounting it on the board to see if it is artistically correct.

During the Centennial, the Choirmaster at the First Congregational Church, along with the Reverend, wrote the River Edge song, which I gave to the choir teacher at Roosevelt School, they sang this at the opening. A photo of the group will be part of the display.

We will talk to NJ Transit, once the display is mounted, to have it placed in the train station permanently.

We were asked to research 380 Bogert Road to see if it was historical, which it is not. One criterion to determine if it is archeological historic is 500 feet from a river, but it still is not historical.

SANDY MOSCARITOLO: The park is being investigated. There is a Grant application, which will be used to help fund the purchase of the property. In order to get the Grant, we need to have an environmental assessment of the property. A preliminary assessment came up with 3 issues: one being an underground storage tank, which we removed. Second issue was the presence of a chemical chlordane, which is a common pesticide that farmers used, but the level exceeded State parameters. We had to remediate the chlordane in a certain area. Testing is being done, which so far indicates the chemical is no more than 12 inches below the ground surface, which will have to be removed and disposed of in a safe manner. The third issue was there may be some trees to be removed depending upon where the chlordane is. Money will have to be spent to correct these issues before we receive the Grant money.

PHYLLIS ANGELO: The historical surveys will be brought to the next meeting. Yoshi has taken all the pictures; however, we don't have the computer skills to combine the photographs with the historical data.

SARA BARTELLONI: What are you looking to ultimately do?

PHYLLIS ANGELO: To put all the revisions together, as some homes were changed and are no longer historically valid.

Lastly, the Library is doing a fund raiser called "Historical Time Line."

SANDY MOSCARITOLO: I am also Liaison to the Library Board, so I am aware of the fund raiser. It is a piece of art that is made up of custom designed tiles, which you can purchase.

PHYLLIS ANGELO: I invited Daragh to come to one of our meetings, as the Historical Commission we should be aware of this fund raiser.

MARY DONOHUE: I will also bring that to the attention of the New Bridge Landing.

PHYLLIS ANGELO: A picture of the train station should be on the library Wall project.

YOSHI AONO: The post office changed their name, before or after the train station?

PHYLLIS ANGELO: They changed it before the train station. When I first moved to River Edge, I was surprised we didn't have a Main Street like most other towns, because early photos show Main Street had a hotel on it, where McDonald's is now. However, when the tornado hit, they were afraid to rebuild on that spot, which is why it never became a thriving Main Street again.

SARA BARTELLONI: I read that in the history book of River Edge. Were you involved in writing that book?

PHYLLIS ANGELO: No. That was Naomi and George Howitt.

SANDY MOSCARITOLO: The next meeting I will bring literature about the Library fund raiser. The artist doing the tiles has had exhibits in Washington, DC, Virginia and a few other places.

MARY DONOHUE: What wall are they doing that on?

PHYLLIS ANGELO: Two walls that are the anteroom. Not sure if they are going to expand it further than that.

SANDY MOSCARITOLO: I believe they are thinking about having it on the right wall, as you walk in.

PHYLLIS ANGELO: So few people are aware we are a historic town and that would help. With Kevin and his wife working on the time line, we don't need to worry about it not being correct. Kevin is the expert on River Edge.

As a fundraiser, this Committee can make a historic video of the town, starting with the Steuben House. We attempted to do this during the Centennial. We can try and do this and if it turns out well, we can sell it.

STEVE CORDTS: We did 12 stations in that tour during the Centennial, with various houses and other points of interest.

PHYLLIS ANGELO: The River Edge Hotel was a stage coach stop. Possibly we can get students involved with help from Sara.

SARA BARTELLONI: We have a few Eagle Scouts, also Girl Scouts Gold Awards, who could get involved. We have a lot of resources at the school, as well as talented students.

PHYLLIS ANGELO: I would work with them on the verbiage. Which brings up the issue with the lack of information for research. It should all be in the Library, and then once the Visitor's Center at New Bridge Landing is built, it should be there.

MARY DONOHUE: The Bergen County Societal Library is located in Westwood.

PHYLLIS ANGELO: I mentioned to Daragh about digitalizing the records and artifacts and he is all for it.

SARA BARTELLONI: What kind of artifacts?

PHYLLIS ANGELO: Bergen County Historical Society has plenty of artifacts, but they have some that are just River Edge, which is what we are interested in. The Borough has minutes from Borough Hall meetings and we have a lot of old photographs and the two books. The information is hodge-podge right now. An important goal for us is to have the history available for anyone that wants to know about River Edge history. There are Grants that we can get to digitalize that information. Oradell is doing this with their historian. Possibly Mary can bring this up at the next New Bridge Landing meeting.

BRAKE IN TAPE

MARY DONOHUE: The flood damaged many of the artifacts. FEMA stepped in and helped us with the restoration. Those artifacts are worth 10 million dollars. The Smithsonian wants those artifacts, but we want them here. The owners of Bergen County Auto Parts agreed to sell the junk yard 3 years ago, which we purchased with a Grant from the Federal Government. That is going to be the site of the museum. The Plans are to replicate a Dutch a barn as the museum. Building is expected to start in approximately 4 to 6 months.

PHYLLIS ANGELO: Do you have the funding?

MARY DONOHUE: We have the money through fundraising events. Events are held every Sunday and 500 paid memberships help support the New Bridge Landing. Once New Jersey Transit has an opportunity to see what is being done their, they will go through with their plan. Historic tourism is a valuable, economic asset. Initially the County wanted to build a pathway that would end at the door of the Steuben House, with a 16 foot high bridge connecting New Milford to River Edge for emergency purposes. After the flood, we had a hard time finding a location for storing the artifacts. The publisher of The Record offered the 2nd floor of the Bergen Record building for \$1.00 a year. In December we had to give that location up, as the Bergen Record is doing something with the building. We found another benefactor, at a secret location. For the 3rd year in a row, there will be a Naturalization Ceremony at New Bridge Landing on June 17, 2011.

YOSHI AONO: That is a very special event, as usually it is done in Newark in a small room.

SANDY MOSCARITOLO: There is a plan to do that entire intersection that the County owns.

MARY DONOHUE: The lot where Pizza Town was belongs to New Bridge Landing. We made agreements with the County that they will reconfigure that jug-handle.

SANDY MOSCARITOLO: They are going to eliminate the jug-handle. They want the Town to vacate Main Street.

MARY DONOHUE: We are in full agreement with that, and we are eliminating the parking lot in front of the Steuben House.

YOSHI AONO: River Edge is very unique with the New Bridge Landing Station, along with having two railroad stations, one being historical.

PHYLLIS ANGELO: River Edge applied to the State to be a Transit Village, using New Bridge Landing area as part of the plan. Not sure if there is any new development.

MARY DONOHUE: We also have the Bergen County Zoo in River Edge, which is the only zoo in the United States that has animals only from North and South America. We will try to make a connection with the County to have a "Family Day" starting with a bus at the Zoo and coming to New Bridge Landing.

PHYLLIS ANGELO: We also have the Washington Springs located in Van Saun Park. Half of Van Saun Park is in River Edge.

SANDY MOSCARITOLO: Has the Commission done any other fundraising?

PHYLLIS ANGELO: No. In the past we concentrated on building restoration.

STEVE CORDTS: I would try McDonalds and Applebee's for fundraising, as they will be the beneficiaries of the park becoming an attraction.

PHYLLIS ANGELO: Since NJ Transit spent money on the restoration of the train station; we should look to locally designate it, so that in the future they couldn't knock it down. This needs to be checked into to see if we can locally designate a quasi-government building.

STEVE CORDTS: Are they not other government buildings designated as historic?

PHYLLIS ANGELO: Yes. We were told NJ Transit would most likely fight it.

STEVE CORDTS: That's not an unusual event. The train station played in the history of River Edge.

MARY DONOHUE: We need to think that over, as we might be limiting as to what they can do. You would like stores and shops to be built and if it was historically designated, they can't do it.

PHYLLIS ANGELO: We are referring to the station on River Edge Road. It is something to think about for future designation.

MEETING ADJOURNED
Next meeting March 23, 2011