

Matawan Historical Sites Commission
Thursday, October 12, 2023 at 7pm
Matawan Municipal Community Center, Main Conference Room

Call to Order: 7:05pm

Roll Call

Members present: Kurtis Roinestad, Barry Orr, Gail Chester, Janilee Yanny, Ray Stuetz
Members absent: Lorraine Arnold
Council liaison: Councilmember Steven Russell
Recording Secretary: Amy Denholtz Lewandowski
Public attendees: Cathy Zavorskas; John Lazar; Daisy Orr; Ryan Michelson, Borough Administrator; Michele Donnelly, Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Middletown Chapter Regent; Robert Meyer, Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) New Jersey President; Councilmember Deana Gunn

Approval of Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve September 14th Meeting Minutes

Main Motion: Orr 2nd: Yanny

Ayes: Chester, Orr, Yanny Nays: none Abstain: Roinestad, Stuetz Absent: Arnold

New Business

Chairman Roinestad noted the importance of following the agenda, discussion by commission members, and comments from the public.

Historic Site Marker Restoration

Restoration of the historic markers by Cardinal Made has begun, and the borough has approved the vendor for commencement of the work.

Mr. Meyer described SAR's process, noting that the Holmdel cemetery was installed without SAR; in comparison, SAR will dig a hole, lay dry cement in the hole, place the stone on top, make sure it's level, add water, and fill the rest in with dirt. Mr. Meyer circulated pictures. SAR will complete the installation themselves or will donate \$300 to the Department of Public Works (DPW) towards installation. Mr. Meyer attested that his society feels they can do it themselves but will donate if the commission prefers DPW performs the installation. SAR will install Rev War flag holders and will have the New Jersey Color Guard there. The DAR will be present for the unveiling since they got the stones.

Ms. Donnelly stated the chapter's goal is to find all the revolutionary soldier graves and mark them. Her organization has done a lot of [grave] cleaning. They learned from Joe Yuris and paid to have the first marker installed. As a nonprofit, they learned how to do it. They can't install in private cemeteries, such as Fairview. It's the same process but put a concrete base foundation underneath to prevent from sinking, placing dry to keep it level.

Chairman Roinestad asked whether there is a preferred method or reason for the variance. Ms. Donnelly responded that privately owned cemeteries may do things differently, noting that DAR has completed dozens but not hundreds; however, all of them are level.

Mr. Orr noted certain graves were identified and marked at Mount Pleasant Cemetery. Thomas Hunn, who has no inscription, and Captain Samuel Carhart.

Ms. Donnelly noted the Mt. Pleasant inventory was incredibly helpful because they couldn't find Hun anywhere until finding the dimensions noted in the book.

Chairman Roinestad credited Mr. Orr with taking pieces of cardboard and laying them to show how it would look.

Chairman Roinestad asked the commission members for their input. He contacted DPW earlier this week and needs to follow up about whether DPW will assist in conjunction with a commission member.

Councilmember Russell asked about the cost of DPW performing the work, to which the Chairman responded it's just the labor/hours. With SAR funding, the Chairman stated his belief that it could probably be done with half of what they're offering to get the supplies, like [concrete] bags and wood for forms. He noted that he has tools to grade it, they're marked and they just need to figure out how to position. So there may not be a need for DPW.

Councilmember Russell asked if it's proper to go to DPW since it's borough property?
Councilmember Dena Gunn responded yes.

Chairman Roinestad will speak to Chad (Historic Sites liaison from DPW), and see if they're willing to help. We've established what it consists of and the appropriate method of doing it. Sent out an example of what to avoid. Somewhat sensitive to this because about 5-6 years ago this commission operated with \$14,000 annual budget, all of which was appropriated for Burrowes Mansion. There was no other funding for other historic sites. There was a budget worked out to get the cemetery updated and remove the overgrowth and poison ivy. The commission put in a lot of effort and is sensitive to not having it look unattractive.

Ms. Yanny recommend working with DPW because there would be more strong members to help. Councilmember Russell concurred because it might not be proper to exclude them. Plus, he called Uras Monuments for a quoted price and each one costs several hundred.

Mr. Meyer noted his past experience all over New Jersey and the public works departments were happy to work with SAR and being involved in the experience. Noted it's a win-win to bring in DPW, with SAR paying \$300 towards costs and DPW being part of the program.

Chairman Roinestad proposed contacting DPW to determine if they'll participate, but the commission is looking to initiate this with SAR covering costs, at a minimum, then circulate possible dates to perform this. And then hold a public event after installation.

Motion to approve the proposal by Chairman Roinestad to contact DPW to determine their level of their participation, to initiate with SAR and having them cover actual costs of materials, and following up with confirming an installation date, and then a public event in honor of the installation.

Main Motion: Orr

2nd: Chester

Ayes: all present

Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Arnold

Mr. Meyer recalled previous concerns from the commission about the flag pole at the Johnson Street cemetery, which came out beautifully. He thanked the commission for its support and getting this accomplished. Ms. Donnelly echoed similar sentiments of gratitude.

Historic Markers Restoration

Chairman Roinestad provided an update about the historic markers and Cardinal Made. Pete Lambusta started removing signs but found problems from some of them being fused together. DPW will help with this. Mr. Lambusta plans on having them all blasted together.

Status of Interpretive Sign

Mr. Orr noted that the sign is in production. Pannier Graphics will ship early to mid-November. The commission needs to make plans to install it, and should check on ordinances since it's a fairly low sign. Mr. Orr has dimensions, installation instructions, and will require concrete for installation. Need to make a final determination for its placement. Doesn't believe new poles will fit into existing hole. It's being delivered to Mr. Orr's house because there's no certainty someone will be at the mansion at delivery time.

Ms. Yanny asked about the old museum sign, and whether it will be used at all? Chairman Roinestad responded that the historic marker is going back and interpretive sign is going in, and the museum sign hasn't been addressed because that's more for the historical society.

Grant Award

Chairman Roinestad thanked Ms. Zavorskas, Mr. Michelson, Borough Administrator, and the borough's grant writer for successfully being awarded a State grant. The grant has two components, totaling \$183,000 (Mr. Michelson clarified it's \$149,000 for electric and \$33,000 for the capitol maintenance plan). The preservation plan will permit us to apply for variety of other grants, not just from the State preservation trust but also county and federal grants. This will help improve initially and long-term. Can have maintenance plan as part of applications submitted for other things. Electric determined by HMR Architects to be the bigger concern and there was less concern about the structural integrity of the mansion. The wooden box electric panel was extremely concerning, so the electric upgrade was significantly more important. It also includes proper lighting and climate control. Waiting to hear back from HMR.

Chairman Roinestad noted the importance of caution and oversight. Historic contracts, when going out to bid, are awarded to professionals who often hire subcontractors who won't necessarily care or be sensitive to an historic building. For example, knob and tube wiring, and demolishing walls to perform work.

The next step is an initial kickoff meeting, usually during the week during business hours. Commission members are encouraged to come if able to attend.

Mr. Orr clarified whether the borough is responsible for the matching component, to which the Chairman replied it was a basis of the grant application so they're obligated to that. Mr. Michelson confirmed the Borough will make it work.

Preservation Ordinance

Chairman Roinestad posed that review of the preservation district ordinances will be at the next meeting when Ms. Arnold can attend. Mr. Orr noted Ms. Arnold is seeking feedback, and the draft document is posted on google drive.

Chairman Roinestad summarized to those attending that there is ambiguity about what the historic district of Matawan means, since the commission gets questions about projects in the preservation district and about recent developments. Noted the general boundaries, Main Street from train station to Route 34 and one side of Jackson Street and one side of Broad Street.

Burrowes Mansion Security System

Chairman Roinestad clarified that surveillance is by cameras, which will be taken over by the police, but the fire and security system (Haig) is a total failure. The security system failed to provide any notification about two recent floods. Water filled the basement and sub pumps injected water into a side road and DPW noticed. The security company has charged a lot of money towards monitoring, and the Chairman found it exceptionally unreasonable that whenever he and Ms. Zavorskas had a conversation with the company, they attempted to bill by the hour for any phone call.

Chairman Roinestad referenced the history of the security companies, and that the infrastructure remained when changed to a new company. New sensors were placed but the switch panel stayed. Removing everything and installing new security sensors may not be necessary, and with electric work some things will get removed and the timing might work better.

Ms. Chester asked about when the contract with Hague expires. Chairman Roinestad noted it's month to month. Hague didn't bill for two years, so then sent one bill for two years of monitoring and phone calls. He noted to the Borough Clerk that not all of the charges were okay, since they shouldn't be billing for their mistakes, like the lack of notification about the flood.

Extermination Services for Burrowes Mansion

The Borough has a contract with Orkin, who performed part of the extermination, either powder post beetles or termites. Orkin sent the additional extermination work to another entity but Chairman Roinestad hasn't heard back.

Mr. Orr noted it looks like there are termite tracks in the old reading room. The wood was replaced so it's fairly new damage and needs to be assessed. The front parlor seems to have beetle damage but unsure if old or new.

New Business - Lead Testing

Chairman Roinestad noted a new lead provision in New Jersey for houses built before 1978, to be implemented by July next year; any properties rented anywhere in New Jersey built before

1978 could potentially have lead, and will need a lead safety stamp or certificate stating there is no lead at a dangerous level. This is a big deal for historical towns since lead is prevalent in every old house. The underlying issue was kids were getting lead contamination which was causing developmental issues.

Ms. Yanny shared insight about testing with cloth and microbe measurement and remediating doors, closets, windows, and high friction areas, and painting over areas.

Chairman Roinestad expressed concern that this new law will sway more people to tear down old houses or throw away old doors and windows because it would otherwise be extremely expensive. This could negatively impact historic homes. Towns will get fined by the State for not having plans implemented. It's not for homeowners residing there, but someone who buys a property and rents it out, whether or not there are children present. Matawan has over 300 houses over 100 years old and there is lead throughout: lead pipes, lead joints, lead nails, etc. because lead and asbestos were the preferred products when they came out.

Ms. Chester asked if other statewide preservation organizations are getting involved with this. It seems unfeasible for a town to inspect every house built before 1978 used for any rental or commercial purpose. Chairman Roinestad noted that each property owner would hire their own inspector and get a certificate, so inspectors may vary in their review of each home.

New Business - 85 Main Street

Ms. Zavorskas and Ms. Chester noted receipt of notice of a variance for 85 Main Street, with big pillars. Chairman Roinestad read the letter, dated Oct. 2nd, stating their "client has requested a variance for the proposed building to convert a portion of the existing dwelling and to add parking in the mid-section of said property. We are hereby giving notice to all property owners within 200 feet of the above mentioned property. Please see attached Form D. We currently have a hearing scheduled with United Planning/Zoning Board of Adjustments of Matawan for November 6, 2023." The Chairman noted this is an example of the notifications the commission receives, and theoretically the commission should be notified because it's within historic district and not just because it's within 200 feet [of Burrowes Mansion]. It's a 200-year old home with a huge garage. The Chairman stated his intent to attend the Planning/Zoning Board meeting on November 6th, and noted that commission member attendance would be helpful.

Discussion/Public Comment

Next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, Nov 9, 2023 at 7pm but council will meet that day (rescheduled due to Election Day). Chairman Roinestad will ask about available dates and check with the Borough Clerk.

Ms. Zavorskas noted a book signing and tea party and musicale and end of 300-year celebration with a cocktail reception during the week between Christmas and New Years. Plus the ribbon cutting with DAR and interpretive sign unveiling.

Chairman Roinestad asked about responding to the press and the commission being comfortable with him conducting interviews. There were no objections raised.

Motion to reschedule the November meeting, and electronically determine a new date and publish it by the end of next week.

Main Motion: Yanny
Ayes: all present

2nd: Roinestad
Nays: none

Abstain: none

Absent: Arnold

Adjournment


Motion to adjourn: Chester
Adjourned: 8:25pm

2nd: Stuetz

Ayes: all present

Nays: none

Respectfully submitted,



Amy Denholtz Lewandowski
Recording Secretary