

Copake Hamlet Revitalization Task Force  
Minutes  
Wednesday ,October 28, 2020. 3:30pm Zoom

Present: Roberta Roll (Chair), Andy Fisher, Tom Goldsworthy, Peter Kelly, Alan Friedman, Richard Wolf (Town Board Liason).  
Absent Len Barham

Also in attendance to give a presentation, were Jennifer Betsworth and Linda Mackey from the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Task Force members and State Reps introduced themselves. Jennifer is expert on State and National Register Historical Districts, while Linda's expertise is Local Commissions and Local Historical Districts.

Options were discussed regarding the pursuit of State/National Registry Designation or a Local Landmark Designation. Both types of designation are ways to recognize important built historic resources in a community, and the information compiled about the structures or districts can be used for a variety of planning and development activities. The designations are not mutually exclusive but do have different consequences.

A State/National Register Historic District or Building is primarily an honorary listing. It provides a limited degree of protection vis a vis state or federally funded activities. It does not require adherence to design guidelines for renovation, unless specific preservation tax credits or grants are involved. It does not prevent demolition of a building.

On the other hand, a Local Historic District or Landmark is designated by a local preservation commission, which is made possible through the passage of a local law. Members of the commission are appointed locally and approved by the state, providing that their expertise meets certain criteria i.e. architect, expert in preservation, etc. Designation of buildings and districts by the commission allows historic and architectural features to be preserved, and can prevent demolition of locally designated structure. Exterior changes to a building are subject to review by the commission. Demolition of a building is subject to review and can be prevented.

Both types of designations do not restrict the use of properties. Both designations can qualify owners for grants for preservation purposes. Public process to identify, recognize and protect the resources is a key benefit in both situations.

Each process has a rationale for being pursued. Since the discussion was extremely technical in nature a recording of the zoom meeting was agreed upon. The recording has been added to the Town's website for those interested in further information regarding these processes.

It was suggested that a preservation consultant be engaged. The cost might run to approximately \$15,000 to 20,000. The consultant would survey the town to determine which buildings and/or areas might qualify for historic registry under either designation. Once an area or building is decided upon, research and documentation of the structures must take place; a consultant might do some of the documentation, or members of the town might take this on.

The approval process could take from 1 to 2 years upon submission to obtain state/national historical district status. If a local law is passed and a commission established, a one year process to obtain NYS approval would be needed. A town can do either one or the other or both.

The next step in the process would be for the Task Force to make a recommendation to the Town Board on how to proceed.

As the meeting was long, no other business was conducted.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Friedman