

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LANDMARKS COMMISSION OF THE
BOROUGH OF SADDLE RIVER**

HELD: JANUARY 31, 2022 (RESCHEDULED MEETING FROM JANUARY 10, 2022)

PRESENT: Commission Chairman Jon Kurpis, Commission members: Karen Williamson, Maria Harper, Lisa Lopiccolo, Ferne Lambert

ABSENT: David Hekemian, Dan Noh, Mary Bello, Michael Licata, Gloria Blumenthal, Laurel Epstein

PRESIDING: The regular meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

PUBLIC NOTICE: Commission Secretary Lisa Ruff read the following statement:
“Notice of this meeting in compliance with the Open Public Meeting Act Chapter 231 of the laws of 1975, has been given by posting a notice of the scheduled dates of all regular meetings of the Landmarks Commission of the Borough of Saddle River on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building and in the office of the Borough Clerk and by emailing a notice thereof to the Herald News and The Record on January 6, 2022 and on the Borough website.”

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made to approve the October 2021 minutes by Jon Kurpis, Seconded by Lisa Lopiccolo

Roll Call Vote: AYES, Unanimous

WORK SESSION/DESIGNATION/APPLICATIONS:

Appointment of Commission Chairman – Jon Kurpis

Motion Offered by Commission Member Maria Harper

Seconded by Commission Member Karen Williamson

Roll Call Vote I

None Opposed

Appointment of Commission Vice Chairman – Maria Harper

Motion Offered by Commission Member Jon Kurpis

Seconded by Commission Member Lisa Lopiccolo & Karen Williamson

Roll Call Vote I

None Opposed

Appointment of Commission Secretary – Lisa Ruff

Motion Offered by Commission Member Jon Kurpis

Seconded by Commission Member Karen Williamson

Roll Call Vote I

None Opposed

- **Canning Factory Discussion** - L.C. Chair discussed this topic and states, In February 2022 we are going to have Barton & Ross come in, he is the consultant that has been overseeing things with the Bishop House to give his final report. This way we can have the whole entire thing come to us in conclusion so that it can open officially and the state will sign off on it. That is coming up.

We are also being in the process of moving an historic property which is The Canning Factory on Woodcliff Lake Road of which is in disrepair. The current owner is going to paying for it to be moved of which has been in the process for many years. But it took some time to kind of come through. And it is going to be moved to either the property next door the neighbor or we are going to be moving it to on the same property of which is the Marker house and putting it there because it is a historic Canning Factory. What a Canning Factory is or was, was that essentially when Saddle River was huge in agriculture and they would do tomato's, strawberries a variety of things. But in order once we got to the point where we had massive fields and stuff the community would basically always have jobs for this to be able to can it. So, essentially what happened was to have this kind of weird shaped farm people would bring their tomato's to and then it would be canned on the inside and that is how it would be done.

Now, what is special about this one in particular it was in 1842 it is not a sight of beauty or this picture as barn or by any means, but many times something that is Landmarked is not made a Landmark because it is not necessarily beautiful. Obviously when it is restored it will look nicer but what it was, was the place where people can come and have a job and it also was a place where we know that African Americans and Native Americans have lived within the Borough were able to go and get work there and get paid the exact same amount as just let's just say white people were also in town and this was before the Civil War. So, its like a really cool thing because well over 100 years ago or I should say almost 200 years ago in fact, Saddle River had opportunities for work where it did not matter who you were, what the color of your skin was or what your background was you knew you went there and put in a fair of days of work you get paid the exact same thing as the neighbor for the same job. It is great that this is still intact for the reason why despite of something like that is magnificent you know architectural like the Taj Mahal or something on why it is just super important because what it does is it you know it shows and

it's like a testament to our community values going on almost 200 years. So, if it is something I am like proud of.

Hopefully if the Canning Factory gets moved to the Marker house what it will allow us to do is it is like essentially like a shell it is not like there is a barn on the inside but, it will give us the opportunity where it can be utilized for storage or we can have it at like different fairs and stuff for barn animals that would come and they could like kind of be inside and then walk outside. Most importantly what it says is to us and the state people is that we care about that history and like we acknowledge it and like we are making the effort and so long as that especially is that the owner is going to footing the bill to move it here. And the reason why is that a piece of the property which is very close to a lot of trees that keep falling and it is just not in good location and quite frankly the guy is not a steward of history but when trees have been falling and what happens is if they smash it in and the owner does not actually live there in the house it is actually a second house for him. So, he does not know about it and might make the situation worse. So instead of risking losing it, it is better to put it in a spot where everyone will appreciate for what it is.

About a year or two ago or maybe three or four years ago, we had voted for the Canning Factory on whether or not it is to be moved we may have to do this again. It is like a time frame where we are like our approval like expires or what not. But either way it is a real worthy endeavor of this also might be coming up in February. Also, we are finally going to be going in fourth with the Museum and what that means is that we have put our budget in to frames of which there is about 25 spots that artifacts can be framed on to the wall in the Saddle River Museum and over the last few years we have dedicated money to have artifacts framed, it is about like \$600.00 per hanging on the wall. So, we have something like all 25 of them already paid for and now it is just a matter of putting artifacts together in a group and then bringing them to a place where they can actually get framed and put up and then opening up. It just always seems when we are about to do it a new variance comes out or there is always something.

A lot of it I am so blame because I have been steer heading this thing for about more years than I could even remember. But we are also in a situation where you cannot do anything because of the pandemic of which there is nothing we can really do about it or if it is doing it in such a way where it would be essentially impossible to allow people in the museum or

allow the students in there or because of social distancing and stuff. It just did not make sense to get it done, open it and then kind of have it sit still. That being said that is also is coming up that I am very excited about in this 2022 Calendar year.

Also, the last thing is that I would also like to maybe this year 2022 try to see if there is other things in town that could be Landmarked that have not already been. A lot of times people do not want to Landmark things because they are afraid it is going to affect their ability like to develop their property or sell it or something but, there are also things that you can Landmark that don't have any real bearing on it. For instance, there is what is called Indian Rock which is on the Walsh's property on Twin Brooks and it is a massive stone and that the Native Americans can put meat around which was mentioned on maps which is going back 300 + years and was an incredible means going back way, way, way bigger than Glen Rock if you know what that looks like. Glen Rock pales in comparison to this one and so it is in the back of their woods so there is no reason that it is so big that you could not even remove even if you wanted to but it would be something nice maybe to Landmark. There is also the spot where the last Native American lived in Saddle River is buried in where he died it is an unmarked grave and they are not sure of the exact spot but it is within like 10-feet maybe. That being said that might be a good thing to look in to. Because it is not like the property cannot be developed it would just be essentially a plaque there. And there is a few things like that we can add Landmarks to but are not really in any way detrimental let's just say there should be no fear from the property owner because it is not like there is any possibility it could affect like where they wanted to make an addition on their house or something like that. Which is a typical fear that everyone will have. So, I would like to do that.

The last one is on Esler Lane which is if you are going up through town actually toward our L.C. Co-Chair's house right before her street on the right there is a small little cul-de-sac called Esler Lane at the first house on the left was the sight of the original Borough Hall and it is not there anymore but in the very front yard there is a little water just about like a pump and that is where everyone would get their water from. And like the original one where everybody would go out and get their drinks and council meetings and stuff like that. And it is literally just a water pump that is coming out of the ground. But that might be also something that we

should Landmark. Again, it would have nothing to do with like how a house is built or developing or whatever but will also say a lot as far as recognizing what happened there. It was not only the first Municipal Building but it was also the first Fire Station and it was also called the amusement hall like where they would have dances and get together and also used for rendezvous and all this sort of stuff like that, that we have pictures of. All of the water at the time of drinking or whatever was all situated around this little tiny hand pump thing out in their front yard which is still there so this would be another one that maybe we can bring to a Landmark status. What that essentially means is that we write up a thing where we say, why we think it is important and that the Land owner agrees to that and then we tell the council, this is the Landmarks we propose to vote on it and then they get a little plaque.

It is good because also the funny thing is that you would think that something that was nationally recognized the Landmark or the State recognize or the county recognize that would hold up the weight to higher up the chain. But the reality is that the laws has it reversed meaning that if you locally Landmark like our Landmarks on a local level that has the most protections so if they were going to let's just say, if they were going to make a road like the State would want to make a road or something to like widen a property or do something like that. It is a good thing that most people neglect but it works out on all sides because it doesn't in any way tie up the hands of the Landowner and it also gives us protection from anything that like a governmental entity wanted to come and kind of do something that we were not okay with.

That being said the current status in the Landmarks Commission is basically it as far as what our 2022 plans are. One more thing there is also been some cool stuff like you always find out things that we didn't realize were happening in town and as a matter a fact I found out recently that the 50's and 60's over on East Allendale Road kind of on the back side of Saddle River Day School, this guy had like the premier bunker for like nuclear war in his back yard. That he had like bought and it was like a big to do where like the company that installed it they were like the test case or he had to essentially and complete and underground apartment in his backyard and there were pictures found of this and all sorts of things like that, so I thought that was kind of neat. And there are always things like this that

always pop up that you cannot believe nobody had talked about but it actually occurred.

L.C. member asked Co – Chair, what is the process and decision of the owner of a Landmarked property such as the Canning Factory? L.C. Chair states, In the Canning Factory case, when an owner leaves a Landmark on their property and it gets into a situation where a 25% of the total value is coming to disrepair, that you as an owner kind of loses control over it and then the town gets to make a decision as to where the Landmark will go. And so, for the Canning Factory the first thought was that we would put it on the property next door because at one time it was a continuous property and the next-door neighbor is actually descendant of the original person that built it. So, it would be a very good idea, and at the same time, there was the thought that if the town (because there are certain things that the town has to do) like for instance, if you have a slab that has to be removed the town has to make sure it sit on something, so if any money is going to be dedicated to something is it really is justifiable that it is being done on a private piece of property versus a town piece of property. Now there are ways to justify this, but if the homeowner is going to have to pay for it no matter what, and there is a thought that it would make more sense because there is not all that much difference in price there is already a barn on the Marker house and the property that Rhindlaub field sits on, at one time was a tomato's, strawberries and a pig farm but these things would be an appropriate venue for it because then it would be outside the same sort of farming system and would have originally put the tomato's there and something more that the community can enjoy.

L.C. Chair states, my personal opinion is that the Landmark just gets saved. I tend to think that it could be anywhere but if you going to move a Landmark on somebody else's property, what is to say that in the future that if there was a landowner that wasn't okay with moving a Landmark and its in the wrong spot, if they let it fall into disrepair. So as long as for saving the Landmark it would probably be better to put it in a spot which guarantee's the permanent placement where as it doesn't necessarily be where it doesn't offset the price. The other thing is that if we ever have to move a Landmark ever again in town as far as which is like a Landmark it extraordinarily likely to happen because we just happen to have so many Landmarks. Our town is not like a town that has one Landmark and having that Landmark to be moved and is virtually nothing. We have almost 30

Landmarks in Saddle River and it is a foreseeable thing in the future and it would be good to have that experience as a town to kind of be draw from because in an emergency and have to do that again it is a complicated process. And not one that you really want to get into, that being said being we are not the ones that are going to be footing the bill, is of how it works out it might be in the best interest to the town to have the logistics down or should an emergency in the future we are capable of handling it in the way of is cost effective and also it doesn't in any way compromise the integrity of the structure so just the things like how do you get it from point A to point B without it just being a pile of junk.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS: L.C. Co-Chair states, regarding the Bishop House and I sent a message to our L.C. member to discuss with her about the gallery. There is an artist that I have spoken to she is very good and I have been talking to her in regards to possibly doing an art show at the Bishop House. Now the thing is when we walked in there we saw the sconces that were already placed so it is taking up a lot of wall space to hang paintings. We have some really large paintings and there is a way to do that where you don't touch the wall there are these special hanging things, they may be called hanging systems or something and they come from the ceiling and fully at the edge there are these string wires that come down and then you would have to put the painting on top. That being said there is not a lot of wall space so make we can make a recommendation to that as of while as maybe on easels, table tops, etc. L.C. Co-Chair states, would like to know when we could meet and meet with a group of artists and go there and walk through and see if its space we can use or not. This could be a wonderful way to kick off the opening of the Bishop House. Even with the current Pandemic going on people can come in with masks on stay for the longest of a half hour or somebody can be at the door and only let in a certain amount of people at a time. It could be something nice in the late Spring of 2022.

L.C. Chair states, we should be open by then, once Barton comes in and gives us his final feel of everything in February 2022 then they can sign off from the state level that is what makes the Occupancy go from the lower number to the higher number. L.C. Co-Chair states, we would actually want the lower number for something like this. Could it be possible to have a meeting there with the artist in

the next few weeks like sometime in February 2022? L.C. Chair states, I think the mayor should be asked on this and then have him talk to the Borough Administrator. L.C. Co-Chair states, we did ask the mayor but his reply was to ask L.C. member Epstein or Borough Engineer but to talk to the Borough Engineer he is very busy right now. And L.C. member Epstein said it was a great idea. L.C. member Lopiccolo states, I do not see any reason why we would not be able to meet at the Bishop House to meet with the artist. We just need to put a date on the calendar it would only be a few members attending the meeting including the artist. The L.C. Co-Chair states, I will be in touch with the few members and get a date set because this could be a great thing and the council can sponsor it and it will be in Saddle River. I do have a huge email list, and we may charge something at the door because the arts council always tries to raise money for something art related or maybe for this time we will not because of the current Pandemic going on.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Nobody to be heard.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Jon Kurpis and seconded by Lisa Lopiccolo to adjourn the regular meeting of the Landmarks Commission.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa M. Ruff
Secretary, Landmarks Commission