



**TOWNSHIP OF WEST MILFORD
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**



MINUTES

April 18, 2023

MAIN WEST MILFORD MUSEUM

Chair Josephine (Jo) Beck called the April 18, 2023 West Milford Historic Preservation Commission meeting to order at 7:05 pm with the reading of the Legal Notice and Roll Call. The meeting was being held at the West Milford Museum due to a prior meeting scheduled for the Main Meeting Room at Town Hall.

ROLL CALL

Present: Josephine Beck (Chair), Steven Boshart, Kristen Koerner (Vice Chair), Kerry O'Brien, Michael Saluga, Brandon Romaine.
Absent: None.
Secretary: Tonya E. Cubby
Guests: Anne Thornton and Amy Jolin

MINUTES

The minutes from the March 21, 2023 meeting were unanimously **approved** on a motion by Kerry O'Brien and a second by Michael Saluga.

SITES

- **1064 Union Valley Road, Apple Acres:** Property owner, Anne Thornton, and Amy Jolin were present to address the Commission regarding the Apple Acres site and their endeavors to preserve and maintain this local historic landmark. Ms. Thornton provided various documents and information on her family's history at the site for the Commission. Noting that seven generations of her family have resided at Apple Acres, a farm site since 1804, she has been making every effort as the sole caretaker to preserve the buildings in keeping with their historic status. Many of the buildings are facing deterioration unless there is assistance available for repairs and maintenance. Ms. Thornton was requesting a "partnership" with the Commission for support in conducting a needs assessment of the historic buildings and preparing a proposal for funding in the form of a grant from Passaic County Open Space to address the most urgent needs identified by the afore mentioned, and yet to be completed, needs assessment.

Commissioner Steve Boshart commented that he is very familiar with the property and currently resides in an adjacent property. Amy Jolin advised that Sustainable West Milford maintained the Community Garden at the site, and there is an opportunity to hold various fundraiser events. She indicated that funds are available with the Passaic County Open Space fund, which could be applied for in 2024 with the assistance of the Commission. Mr. Boshart maintained that the Historic Preservation Commission identifies and

recommends properties for local historic designation, reviews application for certificates of appropriateness for work being proposed, but any grant writing would be up to the owner of a property. He further noted that open space funds were only available to non-profit, municipal, county or publically owned properties, which Apple Acres is not. Ms. Jolin stated that she and Ms. Thornton were seeking a partnership with the Township to obtain grant monies from the County Open Space Fund.

Kerry O'Brien commented that he had assisted Ms. Thornton in the past during a barn-painting event, as well as conducting research about the slate roof. He also obtained historically correct windows for the barn and noted that they had not yet been installed. He noted the distinct difference between Apple Acres and the Wallisch Homestead, which is Township-owned with the Friends of Wallisch Homestead having 501c3 non-profit status. He felt that the main obstacle, in this instance, is that the Apple Acres house is privately owned and not open to the public. But he had no problem with the concept of seeking funding in order to maintain the property as an historic site, especially since there are only a few of the historically designated structures remaining in the Township. Ms. Thornton remarked that she does not want to file as a non-profit, nor open the house to the public. She observed that the slate roofs on the barns are especially in need of repair.

Ms. Jolin inquired how they could have the Commission and Township apply for a grant from the County Open Space funds for Apple Acres repairs. Mr. Boshart emphasized that the Commission would have no issue with endorsing an application for funding for their historic site, but since it is merely an advisory body to the Planning Board, who in turn is an advisory board to the Governing Body, the Commission cannot apply for grant funding. He suggested that Mr. Thornton and Ms. Jolin approach Sustainable West Milford regarding an application for Apple Acres since they use the site for their garden and they have 501c3 status. Mr. O'Brien reiterated that the Township is not in a position to apply for a grant for privately owned Apple Acres and suggested that Ms. Thornton contact Kelly Ruffel, with Passaic County Cultural and Historic Affairs, for assistance and insight into some options for grants and funding.

The Commission recommended that Ms. Thornton and Ms. Jolin make a presentation to the Governing Body, and the Commission would endorse their efforts for funding. Ms. Jolin noted that a needs assessment is required, as well as a budget/plan for the work. Mr. O'Brien observed that the Friends of Wallisch received a grant for a needs assessment last year, and are applying for a new grant this year, but they are submitted by the FOWH with approval from the Governing Body since it is a Township-owned site. Ms. Thornton and Ms. Jolin thanked the Commission for their time to review this matter.

- **1299 Macopin Road, B 9402; L 15:** The Secretary reported that rough inspections for 1299 Macopin Road have taken place and the renovation work continues. It was noted that the contractors (Tri Star home Improvements)

are working on another house in the Township on Clinton Road, so that may be why the renovation of this property is taking some time. Chair Jo Beck observed that the site has been cleaned up nicely. With regard to the question of the outhouse that is in disrepair, Kerry O'Brien noted that it is a contributory structure, and should be maintained/repaired, if possible.

- **Hewitt Church:** Kerry O'Brien advised that he had no update on the grant progress at this time for the Hewitt Church.
- **Long Pond Ironworks:** Mr. O'Brien reported that the Friends of Long Pond Ironworks has the site open for the season. There has been a re-organization in progress, and Hans Niederstrasser may become President and Kerry O'Brien may become Vice President, following the organizational protocol and approval by the members.
- **Wallisch Homestead:** Chair Jo Beck commented that much work has been going on at the Wallisch site. Brandon Romaine reported that the attic in the barn is in the process of being cleaned out. He also reported that there will be an Art Show in May at the Barn. Kerry O'Brien noted that a \$50,000 grant was received from the NJ Historic Trust for the timber frame barn, and \$30,000 was received from a NJ Historic Preservation grant. They have been recently approved by the Township to apply for another grant. The Wallisch Homestead had been nominated as one of New Jersey's 10 most endangered sites (courtesy of the WM Historic Preservation Commission), which helped with recognition of the site and various funding opportunities.
- **West Milford Museum:** The West Milford Museum has prepared RFP forms to request quotes for the stone foundation repair and painting the exterior.
- **Vreeland Store:** Chair Jo Beck reported that the paint on the Vreeland Store is nearly half gone and is in need of painting. It was noted that the owner was aware of the condition of the siding and is planning to paint this year.
- **Jungle Habitat:** It was reported that the Jungle Habitat site, which is owned by the State, has a new sign and the parking lot has been resurfaced.

COMMUNICATIONS

The following items were reviewed and discussed by the Commission:

- Preservation New Jersey – Nominations - 10 Most Endangered Historic Places
- National Trust For Historic Preservation:
Discovering Our Ancestors and Preserving Historic Gravesites (Three Part Series) 04-12-23, 05-10-23, 06-21-23
Forum Webinar: Planning, Preservation & Change (Two Part Series) 04-26-23 and 05-19-23
- Revolution NJ – Placemaking for the 250th – Road Map & Workshop Series 04-18-23 and 04-25-23

MISCELLANEOUS / OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

- The next regular meeting of the West Milford Historic Preservation Commission was scheduled for May 16, 2023 at Town Hall.
- With no further business to discuss, Chair Jo Beck **adjourned** the meeting at 8:25 pm on a **motion** by Kerry O'Brien with a **second** by Brandon Romaine.

Approved: May 16, 2023

Respectfully submitted by

Tonya E. Cubby, Secretary