

Matawan Historical Sites Commission  
Thursday, October 10, 2024 at 7pm  
Matawan Municipal Community Center Conference Room

Call to Order: 7:04pm

Roll Call

Members present: Kurtis Roinestad, Barry Orr, Gail Chester, Janilee Yanny  
Council liaison: Steven Russell  
Recording Secretary: Amy Denholtz Lewandowski  
Members absent: Lorraine Arnold  
Public Members: Daisy Orr, John Lazar, Suzanne Reynolds

Approval of Meeting Minutes

June 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes

July 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve June 20<sup>th</sup> and July 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes

Main Motion: Chester 2<sup>nd</sup>: Orr

Ayes: All present Nays: none Abstain: none Absent: Arnold

Chairman's Report

Chairman Roinestad noted that the discussion from the special meeting was valuable, as Mr. Scibor will use slate for the roof and intends to replicate the unique pattern detail and will reuse what's able to be reused. The originally had one quote from a custom-build company in Rumson but found a better quote from a company in Pennsylvania that wouldn't be much more expensive than the other [non-slate] roof option. A determination about the windows is still in flux, depending on the cost of restoring the original windows. The chairman suggested to Mr. Scibor that some windows could be restored and others replaced, given that the way the approval was written allows for developer discretion, but they still have to match the historic façade.

Chairman Roinestad noted that discussion of the Ryer House triggered a bigger conversation with Aberdeen, who performs the planning, zoning, and inspection work for Matawan now. The major question was who is enforcement entity who verifies that a developer followed the plans that were approved. This commission is, mainly, an advisory board of volunteers. Aberdeen inspects and follows the State code, on behalf of Matawan, and doesn't verify that stipulation with Planning/Zoning Board approval is ensured. Chairman Roinestad then asked the Planning/Zoning Board attorney who enforces the board's approval with stipulation, and the attorney responded that it requires someone to notify the municipality; nobody verifies it but upon notification it could go to Code Enforcement or back to the board, which would be the entity to address whether something is or isn't adhering to its approval, at which time it would be the town or the town attorney.

Mr. Orr asked who would provide notification, and would they be a whistle blower. Mr.

Roinestad replied that right now no one does this.

Mr. Russell asked if the commission could provide notification that something wasn't being done to historically accepted standards.

Chairman Roinestad conjectured that it seems everything in the historic district will be sent by Aberdeen to the Commission. He noted that this discussion triggered a domino-effect, which is why the Crown Rehab signage was brought to the commission's attention. Aberdeen sent this

to the commission but they're already adhering to code. Chairman Roinestad stated it's not the commission's job to enforce the ordinance.

Discussion ensued about the signage and whether permits can be delayed due to expectations of the commission opining on them.

Mr. Orr stated that until a proper preservation ordinance is in place, the commission doesn't have the authority to make judgments and there is no resource, published ordinance, or guidelines for a person to do the proper thing; the commission could only advise.

Chairman Roinestad noted that the commission can still submit a letter, not providing any approval but referencing the ordinance and encouraging adhering to historic preservation aesthetics.

Mr. Orr stated it could be problematic to give advice without a proper ordinance.

Ms. Chester suggested that the ordinance may not be revised. She echoed Ms. Arnold's frustration about pursuing the revised ordinance.

Chairman Roinestad asked if there was any objection to sending a letter or email to the Aberdeen Construction Office and Borough Clerk stating the commission reviewed this particular signage and found it to be in congruence with the ordinance, and the commission can offer to review or consult on what might look more historically appropriate. Mr. Roinestad noted that Aberdeen didn't have clarity on the distinction between this commission and the Historical Society.

Chairman Roinestad motioned to send a letter electronically to construction office, Matawan Borough Clerk, and the resident property owner, concerning the aforementioned.

Seconded by Ms. Chester.

Voice vote: all in favor, none opposed.

Chairman Roinestad asked Ms. Yanny about writing the letter and going to Aberdeen to discuss the future process and timing.

Ms. Yanny said she will email Paula in Aberdeen to thank her for including the commission, but because of the commission's advisory role it would be beneficial to reach out earlier in the process.

Mr. Orr requested that it be clear that the commission is only advisory.

Mr. Roinestad added that it's important not to misinterpret or misrepresent the commission's role, or trigger potential litigation, when the commission has no approval authority. He hopes that hopefully this will improve Aberdeen's understanding.

### **Matawan Historic Sites: Property Reports**

#### **Burrowes Mansion**

Electric upgrade – no update. HMR Architects was appointed as the Borough Architect by the governing body. The work is still months away.

Exterminator's report – no update.

#### **Mt. Pleasant cemetery**

Encroachment – Mr. Orr spoke with the Borough Administrator a few weeks ago and asked if this was referred to the Borough Attorney but hasn't heard back on this or whether he checked with the survey company about if the boundary markers were placed or not. Mr. Orr reiterated that he was unable to find evidence of them being placed.

### **Research consideration for 250<sup>th</sup> Revolutionary Anniversary**

Chairman Roinestad had a conversation with county two weeks ago. A write-up was submitted with John and Kathy as editors, which will go into the commemorative book to be printed in

spring 2025. Mr. Roinestad also attended a county Revolution NJ meeting with other county representatives. The county is encouraging groups to organize events, including special tours. Mr. Russell offered event ideas of the reenactment of the raid on Burrowes Mansion and offering the history of the burning of Presbyterian Church. Mr. Orr suggested there could be an interview with a role-playing John Burrowes.

There is no update on the Mt. Pleasant interpretive sign.

#### Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) involvement in marking graves

Mr. Orr stated there is no update. He wrote to the State Archives asking for military records of Samuel Forman from Monmouth County and the Archives responded that there were multiple persons with the name of Samuel Forman. He received information on Samuel Forman who was buried in Freehold; however, he is not buried there anymore because his grave was supposedly transferred to Maplewood Cemetery in the 1800s but there is no record of him being buried there now. Some people have been disinterred and there is uncertainty. Mr. Orr intends to write a position paper on which Forman is which and compare the information with DAR to determine what to do about the marker.

Ms. Chester emphasized the importance of preventing a false marker from being placed in the cemetery.

Mr. Orr suggested that finding the old church footprint and location by ground-penetrating radar (GPR) might help, and hopefully Monmouth County might be able to help find a good GPR surveyor.

Mr. Orr noted there is a broken headstone in the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery. The tree branch was removed but the broken headstone remains. He passed around his cell phone with a picture he took of the broken headstone. Mr. Orr asked whose responsibility is it to fix this.

Chairman Roinestad offered to forward the contact information for Shevchenko based in Perth Amboy, which repaired the Freneau monument at a reasonable price, to Mr. Orr to follow up and see if they'll repair it (and not just monuments). He noted there's a distinction between repair and restoration. Mr. Orr will send them the picture of the broken headstone.

#### Freneau Grave

No report.

#### St. James Zion Church

No report.

#### **Old Business**

##### Downtown Preservation District/Revised Ordinance

Mr. Russell noted that the law firm Rainone, Coughlin, Minchello is reviewing it. Mr. Russell hasn't received any update since the Borough Administrator attended the September 12<sup>th</sup> meeting and stated his expectation that the commission will have something in November.

##### Vacancy

Mr. Russell noted that the mayor said he wasn't ready to make an appointment yet.

#### **New Business**

### Vacant Positions

Chairman Roinestad noted Ms. Arnold's resignation letter, and stated he hopes she'll reconsider, as she brings an unparalleled level of expertise.

Mr. Russell added that he hopes she'll stay on or come back if a revised ordinance is approved. He added that her nomination was made by the council. Jason Peist is the society's nominee and Ms. Arnold was nominated by council.

Mr. Orr asked if the mayor would consider expediting the nomination.

### Building Applications

Discussion ensued concerning the vacant supermarket property, which was intended to be a Key Food store but will likely be a bodega instead, and the town center and other potential new developments. Many new apartment complexes are filled and some have waiting lists.

Chairman Roinestad noted that 110 & 114 Main Street were approved.

Discussion continued about a historic-oriented downtown area that includes city hall, and included whether the old Borough Hall property may be demolished in the spring, whether it's condemned because of mold or toxicity, and how the property may be repurposed.

### Public Comment

Mr. Orr noted the clarification between email communication and open public meetings; it's possible to disseminate documents but recipients should not reply all to prevent an email discussion.

Ms. Yanny noted that there are people fishing early in the morning and late at night, so a fish bait and tackle store could be useful. Mr. Russell recommended that Ms. Yanny suggest this to economic and business development.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 14, 2024 at 7pm.

### Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Russell

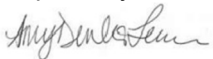
2<sup>nd</sup>: Yanny

Ayes: all present

Nays: none

Adjourned: 8:18 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Amy Denholtz Lewandowski, RMC  
Recording Secretary