

The regular meeting of the West Seneca Historical Commission was called to order by Chairperson Lang at 6:30 P.M.

Roll Call: Present - Paul Lang, Chairperson
Ray Ball
Fran D'Amico
Michael Siuta

Chairperson Lang stated Maureen Berbarly was not able to be present and the commission anticipates her appointment.

Motion by Mr. Ball, seconded by Ms. D'Amico, to waive the reading and approve the meeting minutes of October 2, 2024.

Ayes: All

Noes: None

Motion: Carried

OLD BUSINESS

1. Review of CLG Grant – Survey Status- Update from Preservation Studios

Chairperson Lang referred to the attached Certified Local Government (CLG) Annual Report he submitted to Fran Stern with the New York State Historic Preservation Office, (NYSHPO). Among other things, the status of the town's participation with three incentive programs was requested. The incentives include local tax incentives and grant programs and currently the town is not participating in any program.

Chairperson Lang stated he is drafting the memo Adoption of Historic Commission Recommendations to the Town Board requesting to appear before the board. The purpose of addressing the Town Board is to provide an update and request adoption of the following:

- ✓ The local landmark application procedure, criteria, and form
- ✓ The demolition ordinance and application procedure

Chairperson Lang stated Julian Adams of Carmina Wood Design suggested the commission members should review the town's Preservation Ordinance as Town Board approval for the Landmark Application may not be necessary. The members agreed that Town Board approval is required for any of the buildings that may be nominated. Chairperson Lang stated that the Historic Preservation Commission is waiting on the release of the CLG manual/guidelines from SHPO which will offer additional guidance.

Mr. Siuta questioned when the commission was established. Mr. Ball stated the commission was established two years ago. Secretary Martin stated August 15, 2022. The members agreed they are eager to move forward with the purpose of the commission.

Commission concerns:

- ✓ Chairperson Lang's appointment expires at the end of the year, unsure if he will be reappointed
- ✓ The appointment of Ms. Barbary is still pending
- ✓ Grant money is being used for no gain unless the Town Board moves forward – Chairperson Lang noted historic districts can be listed on the NYS register, but the West Seneca Historic Preservation Commission will not have oversight unless the tools are given to the commission by the Town Board.
- ✓ Mr. Ball suggested adding more information to the memo to the Town Board to emphasize the current limitations of the commission and what is requested:
 - We understand the Historic Preservation process can be confusing, "for instance, we could be on the National Historic Register which would mean nothing to the people of the town until it is enacted within the Town Board"
 - We applaud the Town Board for taking the initial steps, "With the approval of the requested ordinances – *delineate them* - which will allow us" to take the next critical steps and "ensure" the protection of the community's historic fabric
 - Identify the Ordinance titles
 - Identify the extent of the historic districts, for example the 2 historic districts encompass over 50 buildings so far, and state the commission expects to identify additional buildings with the "grant funded survey"
 - The town will be eligible to apply for another CFA grant in the spring
- ✓ Tax relief amounts for property owners and the source of funds are unknown
- ✓ Historic designation could enhance the town and attract homeowners and businesses
 - Mr. Ball questioned if historic designation for a house helps to maintain, lose, or gain saleable value – Chairperson Lang stated generally, the homes maintain or increase value unless the municipality has an overreaching Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Ball suggested including this point in the Town Board presentation. Mr. Suita stated an exception might be a commercial building. Ms. D'Amico stated there is a Federal Historic Preservation and NYS Historic Preservation tax credit programs for commercial properties.
- ✓ How would historic designation impact property owners' assessments, would historic status prompt a reassessment
 - Chairperson Lang does not believe this designation triggers a reassessment
 - Ms. Martin stated in her experience the Assessor's Office receives copies of building permits but is uncertain as to what triggers reassessments and encourages the commission to contact Town Assessor Finbar.
 - The commission members should anticipate questions like this during the Town Board presentation and should consult with Preservation Studios while preparing
- ✓ Federal funding for historic tax credits may be negatively impacted by the incoming administration as seen under President Trump's first term. NYS is working to separate state and federal tax credits

NEW BUSINESS

1. Chairperson's Report: Board Membership / General Effort Advancement

Chairperson Lang is the only member whose term expires at the end of the year.

WEST SENECA COMMUNITY CENTER
1300 Union Road
West Seneca, NY 14224

WEST SENECA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
November 6, 2024

ISSUES OF THE PUBLIC / COMMUNICATIONS BY BOARD MEMBERS

No comments were received.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Ball, seconded by Mr. Siuta, to adjourn the meeting at 7:06 P.M.

Ayes: All

Noes: None

Motion: Carried

DRAFT