

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 Berbary 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. Suita 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



CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT ANNUAL REPORT

Date Submitted: 11/4/2024

Municipality: Town of West Seneca

Report filed by: Paul Lang, AIA

Phone/E-mail: 716-704-0362

Instructions:

- All questions refer to FY2024 (October 1, 2023-September 30, 2024). Please provide data only for the period of FY2024.
- Any revisions to the local historic preservation made during the fiscal year **must** be attached to this annual report as a separate document.
- Please email this completed report to Frances.Stern@parks.ny.gov by **November 15th**.

Historic Preservation Commission/Board

- a. *Please list the names and email addresses of current commission members and any relevant municipal staff who should remain on our contact lists:*

Paul Lang, Chairperson - plang@carminawooddesign.com

Raymond Ball - rayzor30@verizon.net

Fran D-Amico - billsfran@aol.com

Michael Siuta - michaelsiuta@msn.com

TWS Councilmember Susan Kims - Board Liason - skims@TWSNY.org

Molly Martin - Deputy Town Clerk - mam@TWSNY.org

Maureen Barbary * pending TWS Board Approval of Membership

- b. *How many meetings has the commission/board held during the year?* 12

- c. *Has there ever been an absence of a quorum and/or inability of the commission/board to conduct business due to issues with membership? Please explain:*

One month during the summer we were unable to achieve a quorum, however work which was postponed was made up during a work session between meetings.

Training

- a. *What historic preservation training/workshops or meetings did commission/board members attend during the year?*

Commission members attended the annual New York State Historic Preservation Conference, have participated in the virtual education sessions hosted by NY SHPO, and most readily had training / education from Julian Adams, donated by Carmina Wood Design.

b. *Please indicate what, if any, information or training the CLG needs from the SHPO:*

Commission is looking forward to the release of the CLG manual / guidelines which we know are under production. Other than that we are pleased with the offerings made available both via conference as well as the virtual sessions.

Survey/Inventory

a. *Did your local government conduct a historic resources survey? How many properties were surveyed?* 2 Proposed Districts (+/- 55 Properties in Total)

b. *Did your local government designate any local landmarks or historic districts? How many locally designated historic properties did your local government add to your CLG inventory?*

Zero properties were added this year. Two districts are currently under draft nominations via our consultant Preservation Studios, and the Commission continues to work with the Town Board for adoption of certification guidelines and procedures.

Design Review

a. *How many historic properties did your local government review for compliance with your local government's historic preservation regulatory law?*

Zero.

b. *Briefly describe any difficult cases or any recurrent design review issues that have been problematic:*

N/A

Difficulties

In developing and administering historic preservation programs, has the CLG encountered any difficulties with administrative procedures, enforcement, staffing, funding and/or public support? Please explain:

In 2024 the Commission has independently developed nomination and application procedures for listing historic landmarks, while also adapting legislation for demolition review / input. All of that documentation has been submitted to the Town Board with formal presentation to be forthcoming. Would have been beneficial if tools / mechanisms for oversight / review were included in base Preservation Law used for the creation of the Commission. Support from Julian Adams has been invaluable in creation of these to help get process rolling, without we would have been floundering.

With rollout we anticipate push back from community based upon uninformed opinions of what historic designations could do to properties. Would be great if base materials were available to assist us in explanation or outreach to the community.

Overall CLG Program

a. *Briefly describe any CLG special achievements/successes for the period of review:*

Creation of the Landmark Application, Demolition Oversight Ordinance, and Demolition application we feel are outstanding achievements. Hoping to have them approved by end of the year.

b. *Please list or describe any goals or new initiatives for the upcoming year:*

Listing our first districts and or properties. With guidelines and process in place, we then hope to list 1 additional property a month for 2025.

Local Tax Incentives

Does your local government have a local historic preservation tax incentives program that includes your office in some level of review or oversight? For example, NY Real Property Tax Law §444-a also known as the Ithaca Bill. How many owners have taken advantage of those incentives?

I do not believe so, and therefore none.

Local “Bricks and Mortar” Grant or Loan Program

Does your local government have a locally funded, historic preservation grant or loan program that is run through, administered, or reviewed by your office? How many properties have been assisted?

I do not believe so, and therefore none.

Local Property Acquisition Program

Does your local government by purchase, donation, condemnation, or other means help to acquire or acquire itself some degree of title (e.g., fee simple interest or an easement) in historic properties? How many have been assisted or carried out by your local government?

I do not believe so, and therefore none.