

**VILLAGE OF COXSACKIE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES  
February 13, 2024**

Chairperson Patricia Maxwell (“the Chair”) called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Present were Historic Preservation Commission Members: Michael Rausch, Nancy Harm, and Wendy Warren. David Dorpfeld was absent.

A motion to approve the minutes from the January 9, 2024, Historic Preservation Commission Meeting was made by Michael Rausch and seconded by Nancy Harm. Patricia Maxwell voted yes. Michael Rausch voted yes. Nancy Harm voted yes. Wendy Warren abstained. The motion carried.

**New Business**

**Application for National Bank of Coxsackie Store Front Window Changes-** Chairperson Maxwell stated that Michael Ragaini, Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer, forwarded the Building Permit Application received from the National Bank of Coxsackie for the replacement of windows, since the building is located in the Historic District. The windows that will be replaced are on the rear of the building. She has also received the Historic Preservation District Application for Work Permit from Amanda Snedeker, on behalf of the National Bank of Coxsackie. Chairperson Maxwell stated that the application was not clear where it states the exterior trim color as “Glacier White (G8-Poly-PVC)”, which led to her asking the question of whether this is vinyl, since it is not allowed in the district. There are only 3 windows that they are replacing on the rear addition of the building, and they will be matching the existing windows. She asked Ms. Snedeker why the National Bank of Coxsackie is looking to replace the windows.

Amanda Snedeker, on behalf of the National Bank of Coxsackie, stated that they urgently need to be replaced because the glass is actually sliding down out of the panes.

Chairperson Maxwell asked if the other 3 windows are in good shape.

Amanda Snedeker stated that they are good for now, but they may need to replace them in the future as well.

Michael Rausch stated that it sounds like they have lost their structural integrity.

Amanda Snedeker stated that that is correct.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that she reached out to the contact at Comfort Windows, Amanda Keyser, with some additional questions. Joe Carigio ( "Joe") from Comfort Windows, called her back and spoke with her, and it turns out that the exterior frame of each window is aluminum. So, her concern about what the Board would do regarding approving vinyl replacements when it is against the Village Code has changed to a moot point. Joe assured her that they are aluminum clad, although the interior construction is vinyl, and the back of the windows are wood which comes primed. So, in essence, they are aluminum clad windows with the exception of a small strip of vinyl in the middle that nobody sees. So, the Board is good from an exterior standpoint. The interior doesn't concern the Board so much. Her other concern is if the new windows would exactly match the current windows, and they are the 18 pane, colonial style windows, so they will match exactly. However, Joe is reserving his final comments until tomorrow (2/14) because he has to talk to the Production Manager who oversees the manufacturing of the windows to be sure of the individual components. If, in fact, the exterior wood frame around the replacement windows, or whatever the material is, is impaired, they will replace that with wood. However, they do not do painting. So, the bank would have to paint that in the spring. Joe assured her that the new windows will match the old windows exactly, and he is overseeing the project. He did say that he will make sure that it is done right and in compliance with the Code. She is still waiting for final confirmation from Joe's superior at Comfort Windows, but that is all of the information she has as of right now. She was envisioning having to consult the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), but luckily, she doesn't think that the Board should have to do that now.

Michael Rausch stated that it is going to be replaced with what is called "18 light", which is quite a bit. He doesn't know what is on the front of the building, but these will match what is on the rear. There is only going to be about a 2-inch trim all around that is obviously wrapped in aluminum.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that the trim is actually 1 ½", and then there's what would be like a shoe molding, but it's shaped like a miniature crown molding around the outside of the window. That would be replaced if needed. (referred to above)

Michael Rausch asked when the bank is looking to start the work.

Amanda Snedeker stated that she is unsure how long they can actually wait. It is much needed because of the deterioration. Comfort Windows has the windows ready to install once the permit is approved.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that it sounds like it will be a one day, two-man job.

Amanda Snedeker stated that they have spent over a year just trying to find someone to do this work. They had a couple of people come in and take a look at the windows, and for one reason or another, state that they cannot do the job. They tried to use local companies, but it just wasn't working out.

Chairperson Maxwell asked if Ms. Snedeker knew if Comfort Windows is the company who originally did the windows.

Amanda Snedeker stated that she did not believe so.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that assuming that the other windows will have to be replaced in the near future, she suggests using the same company so that everything matches.

Amanda Snedeker stated that she would reach out to this company first in the future. They have been great to work with.

Michael Rausch stated that it would almost behoove the bank to buy all of the windows at once. This way, you don't find out down the road that they are not manufactured anymore. Half the battle is the cost of putting them in. It is just a suggestion. He asked Ms. Snedeker how the east side windows on the building are.

Amanda Snedeker stated that they are better, but also in rough condition. They will have to be replaced at some point also.

Michael Rausch stated that even the storefront windows on Reed Street are not original to the building, because he has pictures of what the building looked like originally. It was three separate buildings that eventually converged into one.

A motion to approve the application received from the National Bank of Coxsackie as presented, with the explanations offered and confirmed by Joe's Production Manager on February 14, 2024 was made by Michael Rausch and seconded by Wendy Warren. Chairperson Maxwell voted yes. Michael Rausch voted yes. Nancy Harm voted yes. Wendy Warren voted yes. The motion carried.

**Signage in Historic District** – Chairperson Maxwell stated that based on the conversation at the last meeting, she has drafted additions to Appendix D-Standards of Visual Compatibility of Chapter 75 of the Village Code-Historic Preservation Districts and Landmarks. When researching vintage signs, she found that the sign that is in Steve's Vintage Clothing downtown matches the vintage aesthetic. She researched antique neon signs and found the same results across many websites.

Michael Rausch stated that it really is “neon style”, because almost nobody has true neon anymore.

Wendy Warren asked if anyone knew how old neon signs are.

Michael Rausch stated that they talked about it at the last meeting and thought maybe between the 1920’s and 40’s.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that she found that neon signs go back to the 20’s.

Wendy Warren stated that it doesn’t go back as far as the Historic District.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that it does not date back to the Historic District. However, so many things have changed since then. There are aluminum clad windows now, there are Thermopane, there are a lot of things now that they didn’t have then.

Michael Rausch asked what the timeframe for the Historic District is. He asked what the cut off is. What decade does the Board have to consider from?

Chairperson Maxwell stated that according to SHPO, anything over 50 years is considered historic.

Michael Rausch stated that that means they only have to go back to the 70’s if that’s the case.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that that is where some of the neon sign examples are from.

Michael Rausch stated that looking back to 1974, there were many signs just hanging off wires, and suspended with cables and poles.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that going back to the addendum to the standards, Linda Mackey, Certified Local Government Coordinator for NYS Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, sent her the guidelines from Peekskill, Pittsford, NY, and Williamsville, NY. However, Williamsville, NY wasn’t really pertinent. They all say that they either approve neon signs on a case-by-case basis, or they outright deny them, and neon signs are prohibited. That is really what it comes down to for the Board. She asked the fellow Board Members if they felt that they should look at this on a case-by-case basis or are they going to just say that they are prohibited. A decision doesn’t have to be made tonight. Peekskill had the most pertinent regulations compared to the Village’s.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that the addendum could include, "...small neon "open" signs in a storefront may be acceptable on a case-by-case basis. Such signs cannot be flashing and will only be lit during business hours. It must also be demonstrated that no other options would be as effective in attracting customers." For sign illumination, she stated that the addendum could include, "a small light illuminating a hanging sign may be permitted. Examples include gooseneck, carriage lamps, or other styles appropriate to the building." That, again, comes from what Linda Mackey sent her. Chairperson Maxwell stated that the addendum could include, "any other external lighting will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis." For instance, all of the examples prohibit the box lights that have the light coming from behind. None of the examples put in a size component, so she left that out deliberately, but again, the Board has the ability to have them be as small as possible if they want to.

Wendy Warren stated that she doesn't like the idea of a case-by-case basis, because she doesn't know how the Board would do that fairly.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that that is why she suggested that the applicant has to demonstrate that there is no alternative that would be effective in attracting customers. In her mind, there are only a few instances where that could be their only alternative. She is not saying that they have to keep it, but that was her thought process when she drafted this.

Michael Rausch asked what the Board is supposed to do about the Ravish Liquors sign which is neon.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that the Ravish Liquors sign doesn't matter because it is vintage, and the Board already approved it.

Michael Rausch stated that his suggestion would be to change the wording from "neon" to "neon and neon style", because very few people would do neon. He doesn't disagree with Wendy Warren's opinion on this either. He doesn't know how many case-by-cases they would have to endure.

Wendy Warren stated that it just doesn't seem fair to tell someone that they can't have a neon "open" sign, and someone else that can make a case for it gets approved. For example, the Board had asked the General Store to remove their neon "open" sign, which they did, but the same owner owns the Vintage Clothing store around the corner which has a neon "open" sign. She doesn't think that that's fair.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that that's a good point.

Wendy Warren stated that she feels that if the Board is going to ask one storefront to remove

neon signs, that every storefront should have to remove them. She likes the idea of having the addendum include the wording about sign illumination.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that the only idea she had in defense of the Vintage Clothing store is that it's the only storefront, besides Babar's Guitars which primarily is closed and does business online, that is on Mansion Street, and people coming from Reed Street might not realize that the store is even there. That is the only thing that she can think of in defense of the Vintage Clothing store keeping the light. That is just her personal take, and it is open for discussion.

Michael Rausch stated that if the Board decided to do away with it (Neon) completely, that they would just have to let people know that there are other options such as sandwich boards, flags, and other options besides illumination. Nobody is restricting colors; it is more of a size issue.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that nothing needs to be decided tonight. She said that if section C of the addendum brings up too many issues, she can take it out altogether. Section C states, "...any other external lighting will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis." In hindsight, that may not even need to be in there, because there are lighting standards already in the Historic District for anything besides signs.

Michael Rausch stated that everybody is used to what is called "RLM Shade", which is the one that looks like an upside down pie plate that directs light downward. Normally they are green, but sometimes they are black, and they usually have a white undercoating. That is the standard older style that people are more familiar with. Now, everybody is going to LED style lights that are sealed units.

Chairperson Maxwell asked the fellow Board Members if there is a consensus to strike section C from the addendum altogether.

Wendy Warren stated that she thinks that that's a good idea.

Michael Rausch stated that he agrees.

Nancy Harm stated that she agrees that they don't need to include it.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that if they leave the part about the shingle sign illumination in the addendum, she understands that it would only be visible at night, but it would also be visible during the winter months from about 3:00 p.m. on. Especially being downtown because the sun goes down behind the hill and buildings. She said that the HPC Board can prohibit them altogether. If they decide to do so, they will have to recommend this to the Village Board to approve before it is effective, but they can certainly do that, and give Steve's Vintage Clothing

advanced notice that they will have to change their sign, because according to Chapter 75 of the Village Code it gives the owners 14 days to make the change.

Michael Rausch stated that they are not singling anyone out, it is just becoming a thing. Which, like a lot of other things, wasn't anticipated.

Wendy Warren asked if the Commission approves neon, if they could put in there that they only accept one color, such as something neutral like an ivory or white.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that she actually liked the sign that the General Store had. It had an old neon color of warm white, and it wasn't glaring. It actually was smaller than the sign in Steve's Vintage Clothing in a sense, because you didn't see the frame around it, you just saw the word, "Open", and it was maybe 12" long x 4"-5" high.

Nancy Harm stated that warm white is a good idea.

Wendy Warren stated that she thinks that that is what the sign at Ravish Liquors is also.

Michael Rausch stated that fortunately, bars have moved away from having a bunch of neon signs. Beer distributors don't give them out any more like they used to.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that that is one of the things that the Williamsville code included. It was acceptable to have an open sign, but it wasn't acceptable to have advertising.

Wendy Warren stated that when talking about the era of the Historic District, she understands that you only have to go back 50 years, but really it needs match the architecture of the building that they are trying to preserve. She doesn't know if there were any neon signs going back that far.

Michael Rausch stated that some of the bars for sure had neon advertising signs.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that in two of the example codes, that if a sign was existing in the 1920's, without discussing how old the building had to be, it could remain, because they consider that historic.

Michael Rausch stated that the sign for the old Eagle Hotel was marbled, because that was something else that they did back then. You would put half glass marbles in a framed sign that would be illuminated internally. They used to do that for street signs as well so that they would reflect light. That was hung probably in the 20's or 30's, and is just another version of a sign that somebody could track down and want to use.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that there are other examples like the Palace Theatre in Albany where the building is an older building, but the sign is originally from the 20's or 30's, and they replicated it when they refurbished the theatre. She said that they will suspend the sign discussion for now.

**Potential HPC Candidate-** Chairperson Maxwell stated that the Board has received an application for a vacancy on the Historic Preservation Commission from Chris Fisher, of 130 Riverside Avenue. He is present tonight to ask or answer any questions related to serving on the HPC.

Michael Rausch stated that Nancy Harm is the one who recommended Mr. Fisher.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that Mr. Fisher would definitely fit well with his experience and skills, and it seems that he has an interest in historic architecture. She asked Mr. Fisher if he had the ability to make a commitment of making meetings once a month.

Chris Fisher stated that that is not a problem.

Chairperson Maxwell asked Mr. Fisher if he would be able to do 4 hours of CPE credit training once a year. She said that the training can be done online if he cannot attend one in person.

Chris Fisher stated that he would be able to do that.

Nancy Harm stated that Mr. Fisher can also attend the meetings via Zoom video conference if he cannot attend those in person as well.

Chris Fisher stated that he doesn't really know what is involved in serving on the HPC Board.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that the HPC is only responsible for exterior improvements or repairs, and they ask for an application from any prospective applicant even if it is a repair, because it is sometimes hard to distinguish where repairs end, and renovations begin. However, it includes anything on the exterior, from painting, replacing a fascia board, etc. The owners have to fill out an application, but they don't necessarily have to go through a drawn out approval process. The Commission can approve applications at regular meetings. The Board needs to be assured that the applicants are doing something that they said they were going to do, and they are not doing any work that was unanticipated. That would create a hardship for the applicant to then have to tear out work done, and it creates a hardship for the HPC as well, which would lead to the HPC having to backtrack and try to get waivers, approvals, etc. The usual scenario is that an applicant comes into a meeting with their application, which is supposed to be submitted 10 days

prior, but that rarely happens. The other avenue of receiving an application is that it can be referred by the Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer for any Building Permit applications he may have received for work being done within the Historic District. After the application is received, the HPC meets with the applicant, and if it is a small thing that doesn't need a Public Hearing, it can get approved that night. If the applicant needs to have a Public Hearing because it is something significant, they will have to schedule the Public Hearing for the following month, and then the Board can approve or deny the application afterwards depending on the situation.

Chris Fisher asked if there are some guidelines that he should learn.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that Chapter 75 of the Village Code is the Historic Preservation Code. That was just updated 3 years ago. That is what the HPC bases all of their decisions on. It is 16 or 17 pages and can be found online on the Village website. The Clerk can run off copies for Mr. Fisher. That Code has appendixes to it, one of which is an inventory of all the buildings downtown that are in the Historic District.

Michael Rausch stated that the Historic District basically encompasses from the Eagle Hotel on Mansion Street, down to Reed Street, up Ely Street to lower New Street, down to the old firehouse, where Patrick Henry's is at the end going south, and then it wraps back around to include the park. So, the rears of all of the buildings in front of the park are included also. It is not just the fronts of those buildings.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that the rear of those buildings has been the biggest challenge, because people don't realize that, and they go ahead and start work without letting the HPC know. She said that the HPC is on their 8<sup>th</sup> year of existence since its creation in August of 2016. The Village of Coxsackie is a Certified Local Government, which helps obtain certain grants through New York State. If the HPC approval isn't in compliance the Village could lose that certification.

Chris Fisher asked if other areas of the Village can be added into the Historic District.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that a survey was done in 1980 where buildings were inventoried. She said that they would like to expand to include more downtown residences. That would allow for more opportunities with grants, but with that comes more guidelines that have to be followed.

Chris Fisher asked how far back is considered "historical".

Michael Rausch stated that SHPO says that anything 50 years or older can be considered historical.

Chris Fisher asked if the zoning matters in relation to projects.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that other zoning doesn't matter because they only deal with the Historic District. She said that it sounds like Mr. Fisher is interested in serving on the HPC so she would like to make the recommendation to the Village Board. The HPC can have up to 8 members on the Board, so she would ultimately like to add another person or two if anybody knows anyone else to recommend. They have to live in the Village, or be a business owner in the Village, and people with backgrounds like realtors, architects, historians, or somebody who has an interest in historic buildings would be preferred.

A motion to approve recommending Chris Fisher to the Village Board to appoint as a Historic Preservation Commission Member was made by Michael Rausch and seconded by Wendy Warren. Chairperson Maxwell voted yes. Michael Rausch voted yes. Nancy Harm voted yes. Wendy Warren voted yes. The motion carried.

### **Old Business**

**1. 2-6 Reed Street/33 South River Street- (former Cumming's Hotel)** – Chairperson Maxwell stated that there are no updates on this project at this time.

**2. Training-** Chairperson Maxwell stated that webinars will be forwarded to members as they are received.

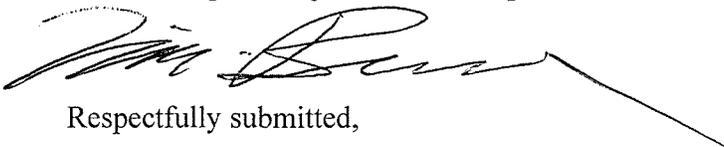
### **Public Comment Period**

No public comments were offered.

### **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the Historic Preservation Commission meeting was made by Wendy Warren and seconded by Nancy Harm. Patricia Maxwell voted yes. Michael Rausch voted yes. Nancy Harm voted yes. Wendy Warren voted yes. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.



Respectfully submitted,

Nikki Berezna  
Clerk