

VILLAGE OF COXSACKIE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES
July 8, 2025

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

A motion to approve the minutes from the June 10, 2025, Historic Preservation Commission Meeting was made by Hannah Kastanos and seconded by Michael Rausch. Chairperson Maxwell voted yes. Michael Rausch voted yes. Chris Fisher voted yes. Hannah Kastanos voted yes. Nancy Harm and Wendy Warren abstained. The motion carried.

New Business

1. 46 Reed Street-State Telephone Building-Verizon Wireless Cell Tower- Chairperson Maxwell stated that there was a joint Public Hearing with the Planning Board that was held on June 19th. At that time, Verizon presented an alternative location of moving it back towards the center of the roof. Verizon indicated that despite moving it back, they did not have to make the tower taller. By moving it back towards the center of the building, there is less visibility from Reed Street, South River Street, and the surrounding areas.

James LaValle, of Young/Sommer, LLC, stated that Verizon decided to move the pole back about 10 feet. This resulted in no need to increase the height. At the Public Hearing, it was discussed by both Boards that this change in the viewshed were acceptable.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that in the packet that the Board received, it shows the type of antenna that they are talking about, and the original location on the front of the building, which was very visible from Reed Street. There is also a rendering showing a chimney type stack that was also proposed, but the Planning Board rejected this style, because it made the tower more visible. There is also a rendering showing the new location in the middle of the roof, as well as the can antenna style that will be used on a tripod. So, the bottom part will be a metal tripod base, with a small “can-tenna” style on top. It is back closer to the chimneys in the middle of the roof. They also show different vantage points from around the downtown area, and the visibility is very minimal.

Michael Rasuch asked Mr. LaValle if they are ready to order equipment and move forward, once this is approved.

James LaValle stated that lead times have gotten substantially better in the last year. This time last year, the lead times were about 7 months. Right now, they are looking at about 6 weeks. As long as the equipment comes in, they could have it done in the next couple of months.

Michael Rausch stated that he keeps reminding residents that it is for Verizon service only. AT&T will be coming at a later time.

James LaValle stated that due to the size of the cantennas, they can only carry one service provider.

Michael Rausch asked what the service area downtown will be.

James LaValle stated that it should be between .3 to .5 miles. That would cover the dead zone downtown that was identified. Also, this service is omni directional. So, that .5 would be a radius around the tower.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that the Planning Board has already approved this project, but this Board's primary concern was from an aesthetic standpoint.

A motion to approve the application received from Young/Sommer, LLC, on behalf of Verizon Wireless, as amended and brought before the Planning Board on June 19th, for the installation and operation of a small antenna on the roof of the existing State Telephone building at 46 Reed Street was made by Nancy Harm and seconded by Wendy Warren. Chairperson Maxwell voted yes. Michael Rausch voted yes. Chris Fisher voted yes. Nancy Harm voted yes. Hannah Kastanos voted yes. Wendy Warren voted yes. The motion carried.

2. McQuade Building- Chairperson Maxwell stated that Aaron Flach is not present at tonight's meeting. Mr. Flach was supposed to get the mailing out to residents within 500 feet of the property alerting them of the joint Public Hearing with the Planning Board on July 17th, but it seems that he did not get the mailing out on time. So, that Public Hearing may not happen. She will keep the rest of the Board Members posted on that. However, in the meantime, he has submitted drawings showing details of each side of the building. The original application was submitted in 2017 and is no longer applicable. However, in that application it does mention a porch. So, that is why the Board would be looking to renew the original application, as it states, "...final details of the porch renovations, property layout, lighting, trash enclosure, and preliminary landscaping, conforming with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)'s approvals." SHPO has already approved both phase 1 and 2. The building will have apartments, with a pub on the ground floor. However, that is not this Board's concern. The HPC is only concerned with primarily the exterior of the building. In the submitted drawings, looking at the front of the building, the porch details will be restored, including the arched roof over the front entrance, and the front entrance to the right will

not have a porch roof over it, but will be an entrance with stairs down to the sidewalk. The windows, which were approved previously, have already been installed. The doors will be restored as well. The Board doesn't have to finalize any details in terms of materials or colors tonight. This is simply to determine whether the drawings submitted are complete enough in order to schedule a Public Hearing.

Chris Fisher asked why Mr. Flach needs a Public Hearing for this project.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that a Public Hearing is needed due to the large size of the project. It is Planning Board policy that requires neighborhood notification for the Public Hearing. The HPC doesn't require the neighborhood notification, but for something of this magnitude, this Board requires a Public Hearing also. Looking at the side view, that faces the north side of Mansion Street, there will be drainage underneath, and a sidewalk above. Next to that, there will be a grass slope.

Hannah Kastanos stated that it sounds like Mr. Flach will just be restoring what is already there.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that that is correct. They are restoring what is already there, repairing if necessary, and replacing if necessary.

Michael Rausch stated that this building has had the roof replaced in recent years. Chairperson Maxwell agreed, and stated that it had been approved by us.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that in looking at the drawings, there will be Arborvitae trees behind the dumpster. This way, anybody on the library side of the property will not see the dumpster. The dumpster itself will be enclosed with either wood or metal fencing, probably replicating panel fencing with the crown on top of the posts. Again, this does not have to be a final decision tonight. The parking spaces and the layout have already been approved by the Planning Board. The drawings also show the light fixtures that Mr. Flach proposes to put around the parking lot and the property, which are similar to those at the Dolan Block. The drawings also show the slate sidewalks that are already there. As far as she understands, they are going to be re-positioned, and re-purposed. Mr. Flach is also keeping the metal railings that are there, because they are at least 50 years old, and mimic the ones going up to the library. So, those will remain the same, but will be re-furbished. Finally, on the side facing the Eagle Hotel, there will be a wall with grass, going down to the driveway, that goes back to the parking area. These are the things that this Board has the authority to review.

Hannah Kastanos asked what kind of stone the pavers are.

Michael Rausch stated that the stone is flagstone.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that it is the stone that is already there currently, and matches the ones going up to the library.

Hannah Kastanos asked if they are all different sizes.

Michael Rausch stated that he believes that they are between 3 to 4 feet wide, by approximately 2 feet. The goal is for him to re-purpose the ones there.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that the library also has kept the stones they had out back as well, if they're willing to share if Mr. Flach needs pieces.

Nancy Harm asked what the use of the building would be.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that the upper floor will be small apartments, and the ground level will be a pub. According to the Village Center Zoning, top floors have to be residential, and bottom floors have to be commercial. So, this meets the zoning requirements. Again, that is not this Board's area of concern.

Chris Fisher asked if the bottom floor *has* to be commercial, or it *can* be commercial.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that per the Village Code the bottom floor *has* to be commercial.

Michael Rausch stated that the only exception is for properties who are grandfathered in, that have been operating a certain way straight through. If the building hasn't been operating that way for a long time, then you can't, but if it is pre-existing and active, than that's another thing.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that if the property's principal use has been abandoned for over a year then the Planning Board is required to review any new applications, even if they are the same in use as what they were previously. That's part of the Code.

Michael Rausch asked if he understood correctly that the Board is just reviewing at this point, not approving.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that that is correct. The Board is approving it as complete enough for a Public Hearing. Any details that need to be ironed out can be done as a future time.

Chris Fisher asked where the exit is to the parking lot on the drawings.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that there isn't an exit. Cars would utilize a combined entrance/exit.

Michael Rausch stated that he knows that Mr. Flach was trying to talk with the library about gaining secondary access through the library's lot.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that the property was originally split into two different Zoning Districts, Mixed Residential, and Village Center. However, the Village Board recently granted the applicant's request to make the whole property Village Center, in order to accommodate for more parking as a combined lot.

Michael Rausch stated that per the plans, it looks like there is 17, possibly 18, parking spots in the back.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that this conforms to the Village Code, and Delaware Engineering has reviewed these plans also. She said that she believes that Mr. Flach was going to try and resurrect the stones that Dr. Hammerer had on the one side, and make a retaining wall for the driveway.

Michael Rausch stated that originally, there was a pretty large cut stone retaining wall. It was beautiful.

A motion to approve the application received from Aaron Flach, for the McQuade Building, as complete for purposes of scheduling a Public Hearing was made by Michael Rausch and seconded by Wendy Warren. Chairperson Maxwell voted yes. Michael Rausch voted yes. Chris Fisher voted yes. Nancy Harm voted yes. Hannah Kastanos voted yes. Wendy Warren voted yes. The motion carried.

3. 34 Reed Street-Porch-Chairperson Maxwell stated that the owners of 34 Reed Street had to perform an emergency repair to the back porch railing. This Board is not approving anything tonight, just documenting the repair. The contractor decided rather than replace the attachments to the side, it was safer to replace the entire section. In talking to Susan Baldaserini, she stated that they hope to restore the back of the building in the future, likely in 2026. That would go before this Board when the time comes. Chairperson Maxwell stated that she just wanted to make sure that this repair got documented for the files. She is not looking to approve this in retrospect, since that is not their policy.

4. 45 Reed Street-Coxsackie General Store-Chairperson Maxwell stated that Amy Bennett decided that she was not going to attend the meeting tonight, because she did not feel that she had enough information to properly present her side of the issue with the shed that was placed behind 45 Reed Street. So, this issue will be postponed until August. In the meantime, she asked Ms. Bennett to see to it that the property is mowed more frequently, and if she could submit an application for the repair and painting of the fence. This way, that work could be done before the fall. She has not yet heard back from her.

Michael Rausch stated that these things are ultimately up to Ms. Bennett as the property owner.

Old Business

1. Training- Chairperson Maxwell stated that she will continue to forward any webinars received from the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions (NAPC) to the Board Members as they are received.

Public Comment Period

Karen Gunderson stated that she doesn't like the big windows on the front of her building. She would like to put up some wainscoting in front of the windows in order to cover them up a bit. She doesn't know if that is too extreme of an idea for the Historic District or not. She would also like to build a balcony on the back of the building. She doesn't know who to go to, to get permission.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that it would require a Building Permit, so she would have to go to the Building Inspector, Michael Ragaini. He is in the office Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 8-11 a.m. Sometimes he is out doing inspections, so you can always call the office and make an appointment. She said that whatever Ms. Gunderson decides on in terms of the front windows, and the back porch, would require filling out an application with this Board showing the design, materials, etc. It doesn't need Planning Board review, it only needs a Building Permit, and this Board's review. The HPC permits expire after 2 years, so if she is still in a very preliminary stage, there is really no sense for Ms. Gunderson to submit an application until she knows she is ready to start working on it. She said that if Ms. Gunderson feels that she has the design in mind, etc., she can always submit the application in time for the August HPC Meeting on August 12th. She can email the application to her.

Karen Gunderson stated that she will not be in the area on that date, so it may have to wait until September.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that Ms. Gunderson can always have someone attend on her behalf if she likes. So long as they are authorized by Ms. Gunderson. There is a section of the application that authorizes this.

Michael Rausch stated that as far as the front goes, if you look at it for what it is, and what it was, Ms. Gunderson changed out, with approval, the front door to the left to access the upstairs. The windows and the wainscoting on the front haven't changed in probably 60-70 years. It has been basically the same design for a long time.

Karen Gunderson stated that the function of the building has always been a store, and there was the mentality of having that being open to people that were on the inside, which makes a lot of sense, but it gets in the way of her light, and it is so hot from the sun coming in. She was thinking, to increase the attractiveness, she could also put small window boxes in, and plant some nice vines and things, going up the side of the building, which might be really pretty. That is one thought that she had.

Michael Rausch stated that Ms. Gunderson would have to bring designs to the Board.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that approving planters is nothing unusual for this Board, as lots of the businesses downtown already have them. So long as it meets the look of the downtown area, but yes, they would need the design.

Karen Gunderson asked if Chairperson Maxwell will send her the application to be filled out.

Chairperson Maxwell stated that she will email it to Ms. Gunderson.

Hannah Kastanos stated that if Ms. Gunderson planted trees in the planters, that might help block some of the light from coming in.

Karen Gunderson stated that she was thinking of maybe planting passion flowers. They really do well with warm sun. They are really beautiful.

Adjournment

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nikki Berezna". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Nikki Berezna
Clerk