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**Notes from last Historic Hillsdale meeting**

1 message

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Tue, Mar 28, 2017 at 4:29 PM

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Minutes of Historic Hillsdale Committee March 19, 2017

Attending: Lex Lalli, Peter Cipkowski, Jay Rohrllich, David Gallagher, Geoff Brookman, Jamie Johnson, James Wagman. Timi Bates, Tom Carty, Steve Bluestone (guest) Joan Wallstein

**PART ONE – Review of ongoing projects.**

**Eastgate:** Friends of Eastgate (FOE) is set up as a not-for-profit organization, with a Board of Directors and an Advisory Board. The board is now developing a strategic plan. FOR is planning an official launch in May: website, press releases, event. Website is in construction ([www.friendsof Eastgate.org](http://www.friendsof Eastgate.org)). FOE applied to the Berkshire Taconic Foundation for a grant to create additional panels about Eastgate for RJHS exhibit about the Columbia Turnpike that is opening this summer. Later in the year the exhibit will move to the Hudson Area Library and then the Columbia County Historical Society. Exhibit will focus on the Columbia Turnpike (Route 23 from NY/Ct Border to the Hudson River), Eastgate Toll House and future possibilities for uses of the Eastgate from James Wagman's designs.

The area around the building will be cleared by Todd Shields who is a contractor interested in working on the building. The owner of the property between Mitchell Street and Eastgate has been identified. Bill Krattinger from NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is very interested in working with FOE.

**House Tour:** Saturday, August 12: Timi Bates presents "Historical Houses of the Future." Focus on green, contemporary architecture, coordinated with lecture

at library. Bluestone and Wagman homes included as are others being finalized. Publicity will begin in April. Gala at Matt and Tom's for patrons will be held. The House Tour Committee would like to see some of the proceeds go to the Cemetery restoration efforts and to Friends of Eastgate depending on how Town rules permit allocation of funds.

**Cemeteries:** Joan Wallstein announced that the committee has identified 15 cemeteries (9 on public land, 6 on private) in Hillsdale, a map of cemetery locations was created, a web page is to be created. Signs are being designed for cemeteries on public lands, to be manufactured and installed this spring. Research on who is buried in each is ongoing.

**Update on Buildings in the Hamlet that are for sale:** rumors but no final sale yet on Hillsdale House. Matt White and Tom Schumacher bought old Agway building at bottom of Anthony St. They will decide on use and restoration in year to come; now concentrating on rehab of house on Main Street next to HGS Home Chef. "Demilune" Candle business is in negotiation with old Independent building on Route 23. B&G liquor store will be a showroom and tearoom.

**Rail Trail:** Tom Carty: All prep work done, and asphalt surface will be finished in Spring. Looking to tunnel and bridges over 22 and RJ Creek in future.

**Sidewalks:** NYS DOT has signed off and work is expected to be completed in about 3 months, with work to begin in late spring. Some lighting is included, additional lighting remains to be funded.

## **PART TWO - Future of Historic Hillsdale Committee:**

-Possibility of merging with Hamlet Committee - it was agreed that this was not a good idea.

- HH to become involved in town history – i.e. stories of previous ownership of houses, who is buried in cemeteries, etc. It will still be historic preservation centered but the relevant historical information is part of its mission.

HH is presently too Hamlet centered. If HH is to remain relevant, it must expand to entire town. 1. Identify historic districts such as Green River, Harlemville, North Hillsdale; identify leaders to move this process - Green River (Deborah Bowen), Harlemville (Martin Ping), North Hillsdale (Coclaugh's). It was suggested that someone speak to Ancram people who are in process of making Ancramdale a separate historic district. 2. Identify all properties in

Hillsdale township on the National Register (Bill Krattinger will know) A committee was formed to accomplish these tasks.

-Clarify HH and FOE: HH will remain an advocate for FOE, but FOE is not a committee of HH. It is a separate not-for profit entity.

-Certified Local Government (CLG) advantages and disadvantages: Historic District designation does not protect historic buildings from being torn down or converted to uses that are not consistent with town character and image. Special tax arrangements can be made for historic buildings. "Certified Local Government" is an official designation given by the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSOPRHP) . Among other things, it (1)allows the community to establish a Preservation Commission that can develop rules for what can and cannot be done to historic buildings, (2)it can work with town Tax Assessor on tax abatements, and3) it can enforce Preservation regulations and rules.

- Pursue establishing Route 23 as Historic Road through NYSOPRHP. Scenic byway designation with Department of Transportation (DOT) is very complicated and probably not appropriate. Historic Road designation is much easier but does not provide funding. DOT federal and state do provide funds for scenic byways.

-Approximately \$6000 is in the bank account for HH held by the town. More income is expected from the 2017 House Tour:

- The following funding requests were discussed and funds allocated to

**-cemetery signs - \$1000**

**-House Tour expenses \_ \$4500**

- Other requests for funding:

- historic designation research for other parts of Hillsdale

-engineering needs for FOE

- website creation/expansion (\$1000 and up)
- HH public relations, marketing of our projects.
- Tax credit promotion to owners of historic properties.
- Signage in town promoting history of Hillsdale for visitors: simple sign with reference to Website.
- Historic road designation – look into costs.

Master Plan for HH Committee should be developed for the future under new leadership. Lex Lalli to step down as Chair of HH in September.

Notes taken by Jay Rohrlich

NOTE: At Preservation League meeting on 3-22, it was announced that consideration is being given to increasing the federal share of tax credits for commercial buildings from 20% to 30% - this is now proposed but has not been approved. If it is, it is very good news for Hillsdale House, old Agway, and any other commercial properties considering restoration.