

**MINUTES  
OF THE  
CRANBURY TOWNSHIP  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
CRANBURY, NEW JERSEY  
AUGUST 31, 2021**

**TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING**

The regular meeting of the Cranbury Township Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was held on August 31, 2021 at 7:00 pm by remote access videoconferencing in response to COVID-19 and the updated Open Public Meeting Act guidelines.

**CALL TO ORDER**

With a quorum present, Mr. Golisano called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE**

Pursuant to the Sunshine Law, adequate notice in accordance with the Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6) was provided on January 8, 2021, of this meeting's date, time, and place, and the agenda was mailed to the news media, posted on the Township bulletin board, mailed to those requesting personal notice, and filed with the Municipal Clerk. Notification of remote access meetings going forward, until further notice, was posted on the Township website on July 3, 2020 and sent to the Trenton Times, Home News, and Cranbury Press on July 3, 2020.

**ROLL CALL:**

Members Present: Mr. Golisano, Chair, Mr. Walsh, Vice Chair, Ms. Ryan, Mr. Szabo, Alt I and Mr. Geier, Alt II

Members Absent: Ms. Marlowe and Ms. Suttmeier

Professionals and Staff Present: Evelyn Spann, Committee Liaison  
Robin Tillou, Historic Preservation Commission Secretary

**APPLICATIONS**

**HPC118-21, #50 Maplewood Avenue, Block 33, Lot 9, Screen Porch at Rear Yard**

Mr. Robert Christopher was present and is the Owner and Applicant for 50 Maplewood Avenue Certificate of Approval (CoA) application.

Mr. Christopher introduced the application stating he is proposing a screen porch directly attached to the rear of the home. There will be screen walls, a pitch roof and decking material that may end up being wood or something composite. It has little visibility from the street, and he will be getting in touch with the Zoning Officer as far as setbacks are concerned.

Chair Golisano would like the zoning permit to be approved as part of the condition.

Chair Golisano stated the example that was sent to the Commission of the screen porch is a single gable and from the back it may affect the other windows, especially the center window.

Mr. Christopher stated the example was not exact of what he is proposing. It will not be pitched; it will be a shed roof straight off the house. There will not be a gable.

Chair Golisano confirmed treating the upper triangular area in the shed section to have it open all the way to the top.

Mr. Christopher stated yes. And any trim and finish will be matched to the existing.

Chair Golisano stated setting it in from the edge slightly is recommended as per the plans.

Mr. Szabo stated this home has been gutted and redone. The framework is old but most of it is new material.

Mr. Christopher stated 17 years ago is when he occupied it and re-gutted it.

Mr. Geier stated the Commission was not supplied elevations or anything specific to what is being proposed.

Chair Golisano announced this application will be tabled to the next meeting due to insufficient materials being submitted.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Proposed Changes to Historic District and Buffer Areas**

Ms. Leheny stated the memo that was distributed from her to the Commission regarding the changes to the historic district and buffer areas is structured to sum up the feedback from the July 20, 2021 public hearing. It has been broken down to six aspects of the amendments.

Ms. Leheny stated the first proposed change is to designate the Cranbury Station Hamlet Historic District. The Planning Board is planning to amend the master plan in October. There is no recommended action on this. The second proposed change is to remove the 200' buffer around the contiguous historic district. HPC may want to maintain review on certain properties that are in the buffer currently. Essentially it will be recommended that the buffer is removed around the contiguous district, but the stand-alone properties in the buffer to be evaluated to be in the historic district. You cannot remove the buffer in one area and not in another area. The buffer is defined in the ordinance § 93-2 Definitions. Historic Buffer Area - A two-hundred-foot buffer, measured from the lot line, surrounding a designated historic building, landmark or site other than a historic building, landmark or site located within a historic district. The issue is if it is 200' in one area it needs to be 200' in every area. It is recommended to remove the buffer. Yet, HPC may want to retain review of some of the properties. Some properties do not make sense as far as the Historic District. An example are the properties on Wynnewood Drive that are not oriented to the district and what happens on these properties have no impact on the historic resources within the district. It is recommended these properties be removed from the buffer with no further action being taken. The second are properties that can be incorporated in the historic district because they themselves are historic. Take them out of the buffer, but then do the research and documentation to possibly add them to the historic district. The third are properties that may not meet the criteria of historic designation but could be incorporated in the historic district as non-contributing buildings. A non-contributing building is a building that does not contribute significance to the district, but what happens on these properties impacts the integrity of the overall district. HPC would use different standards for properties considered non-contributing. The final category in the buffer area are those properties where a portion of the property is in the historic district/buffer. The entire parcel being in the historic district will eliminate any confusion for the HPC and/or the Owner. The different areas in the buffer are on the north side of Plainsboro Road and four properties on North Main Street to be removed from the buffer and include in the historic district. Portions of Village Park, Bennett Place, Georges Garage, and Evans Drive to be removed from the

buffer. Brainerd Lake has a portion already in the district/buffer and it is recommended the remainder of Brainerd Lake be included. The historic buildings seen on the map that are not part of the contiguous historic district with 200' buffer around those buildings should be left alone due to meeting the definition of historic buffer per the ordinance.

Ms. Leheny stated the third proposed change is to maintain the existing historic buffer around historic landmarks. We recommend those remain around those individual landmarks. Those include 40 Station Road, 143 N. Main Street, 158 N. Main Street and 165 N. Main Street. The fourth proposed change is to include entire tax parcels where currently only a portion is in the historic district. There has been documentation done on most on these properties. 1 Prospect Street, 5 Prospect Street and 23 N Main St were all inventoried extensively on the 2017/2018 inventory that are on the Cranbury Township's website in the HPC department. Those could be added in the historic district. 12A, B and C on Station Road in the 2015 survey will be included in the historic district as a noncontributing building. There was no documentation in 2017/2018 on Brainerd Lake or 22 Station Road which needs to be done before this is designated. The inventoried parcels can be included in the historic district as contributing and noncontributing.

Ms. Leheny advised of the fifth proposed change which is to place the North Side of Evans Drive in the Historic District Buffer area. It is recommended that no action be taken at this time. This is because it does not meet the ordinance of a buffer area. It would be difficult to regulate to figure out if it is this person's rear yard and this person's side yard. The feedback from the July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting is the proposed changes could be controversial and the ordinance may be difficult to survive a challenge for what would be regulated on properties versus the public benefit. What had come up as far as why the view corridors were to be protected due to concerns of bulkheads being constructed. Brainerd Lake is a tax parcel so if it is adjacent to someone's yard then any bulkhead would have to come before HPC for review.

Ms. Leheny advised of the sixth proposed change which is the additional properties of the historic district including properties outside of the historic district and buffer. Per ordinance these must be documented like what was done for the Cranbury Station Hamlet. HPC should pursue documentation of these properties as these would qualify as being a contributing building, others may not qualify for contributing but their location with the context of the larger historic district may warrant their inclusion in the historic district as noncontributing buildings. Some of these changes can be done relatively easy. This would be the Cranbury Station Hamlet District, removing the 200' buffer and adding the properties where only a portion of the parcel is in the district and include those properties in the contiguous historic district. Additional documentation will then need to be done for the properties mentioned.

Chair Golisano stated we are moving away from block and lots being buffers. What is shown on the map will essentially be going away. The backyard of properties along Brainerd Lake are already controlled enough from a zoning standpoint where it will not be able to build close enough from the waterfront.

Ms. Leheny stated that is correct, the riparian regulations restrict these properties already.

Chair Golisano confirmed the bulkheads that would be adjacent to the Brainerd Lake would be flagged for review.

Ms. Leheny stated if Brainerd Lake is added as a contributing resource, then yes it would be.

Chair Golisano stated it seems like getting away from defining properties as buffers and more along the line of looking within the existing buffer area and evaluating each of the properties that must go through evaluation and review. He broke it down to classify the buffer changes as A – D. A is properties that do not make sense in the historic district. For B and C some do contribute, and some do not but make sense to be part of the cohesive historic district. D is clarification of including the whole tax parcel. We need to define the review process and how to go about looking into each one of the properties in question. If there are individual properties within the proposed contiguous district should be called out as contributing members in the middle of the gap between the current historic district and the first contributing member to the north. If one house around the individual properties is identified in that area the 200' buffer would touch every one of those houses. It is hard to quantify the properties for a review that are not in view, for example the farthest north house and the property on Silvers Lane that are technically in the buffer area. We may want to do an examination of the State maps due to possibly being carried through contiguously currently.

Mr. Szabo stated what is in the ordinance regarding the buffer area around the historic district is not as defined on the map of the Village HD and the map and the ordinance should be aligned. For example, the rear properties on Wynwood Drive have no impact on the historic district so the buffer be removed. Is there any way to define on the historic streetscape the 200' buffer on either side and not include the rear property line?

Ms. Leheny clarified it would be a 200' buffer as visible from the public right-of-way is what is being requested.

Mr. Szabo stated the original historic designation application included several of the properties on North Main Street, but when it came down to designating those properties they were left off. When they decided on the village historic district many of the properties had sidewalks, and it may have been decided to stop properties where the sidewalk ended. In the new year we are planning to submit a CLG grant, and we may be able to request the grant for the inventorying properties we are proposing to put in the village historic district.

Ms. Leheny stated yes you should be able to.

Mr. Szabo wanted to ensure in the existing guidelines that HPC can review the bulkheads along Brainerd Lake.

Ms. Leheny stated they will have to submit a building permit which will then trigger the building department to advise to submit to HPC.

Mr. Szabo requested a quantity of properties being affected by the changes to the HD and buffer area. The thought is that the total number of properties proposed to be added to the HD is less than the number of properties currently in the buffer area around the HD.

Ms. Spann stated bulkheads must go through the Department of Environmental Protection first.

Vice-Chair Walsh asked if it is the intention to move the Hamlet and the changes to the HD and buffer zone together.

Ms. Leheny was directed to do so.

Vice-Chair Walsh stated there may be concerns with what is now submitted to delay the changes to the HD and buffer area, so can we move forward with the Hamlet district.

Ms. Leheny would recommend breaking it into components and they can move forward with the Hamlet District.

Mr. Szabo stated to keep in mind the CLG grant would be submitted in January 2022 and if approved, funds would be made available to implement a survey would in 2023.

Chair Golisano does not believe the two designations will be able to move forward together.

Ms. Spann stated HPC should do what they can do. The Hamlet is ready to go and decide this evening what is prepared and ready to go. HPC must stay true to the Master Plan recommendation.

Chair Golisano stated getting closest to the Master Plan recommendation is to define the streetscape and redefining the buffer.

Vice Chair Walsh stated HPC should move forward with the Hamlet.

Mr. Szabo stated his concern of removing the buffer around the Village HD there are some properties HPC would no longer have under review unless we have a some of those properties included in the HD or have a buffer on the street side to be enacted in its place.

Ms. Ryan stated there is more work to do and taking slower steps to have the district protected while figuring this out would be wise.

Ms. Leheny suggested including the entire tax parcels for those properties on Prospect, the school and on Station Road. The issue with Brainerd Lake is we may need documentation.

The conversation continued with the HPC and Ms. Leheny regarding what should be voted on.

Chair Golisano opened the meeting to the public.

Ms. Janice Mondoker, 92 Halsey Reed Road, was present from the public. Ms. Mondoker stated she is in support of the Township moving forward on the Cranbury Station Hamlet District designation. We have waited so long and would be disappointed to miss out on this opportunity.

Ms. Leheny gave a synopsis of the Hamlet district and the additional portion of the parcels that already has the documentation should move forward. Removing the buffer is too intricacy combined with changes to properties in the historic district. Adding buildings to the HD that you do not feel comfortable removing from the buffer until the inventory is done. She feels they should move away from buffers and just have contributing and non-contributing. The brown parcels for the entrance to Village Park and the Cranbury Brook Reserve which are a part of the HD, should be removed from properties in the HD and can be removed. They are still subject to HPC review due to being in the buffer once removed.

Chair Golisano made a motion to approve the full partials, defining Evans Dr. current protection being adequate and removing partial parcels that are partially included that do not need to be included. Vice Chair Walsh offered a second.

**ROLL CALL:**

AYES: Mr. Golisano, Ms. Marlowe, Ms. Ryan, Mr. Szabo and Mr. Geier  
NAYS: None.  
ABSTAIN: None.

**Sustainable Jersey Historic Preservation Element**

Chair Golisano stated this will be tabled to the next meeting and we can investigate this further to contribute 10 points to the Township for Sustainable Jersey.

**MINUTES August 17, 2021** – Chairperson Golisano advised of the one revision for rod iron being written as opposed to wrought iron.

Chair Golisano made a motion to approve the August 17, 2021 minutes with revisions. Vice Chair Walsh offered a second.

**ROLL CALL:**

AYES: Mr. Golisano, Ms. Ryan and Mr. Walsh  
NAYS: None.  
ABSTAIN: None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairperson Golisano opened the public forum for anything not on the agenda at 9:15 PM. With no public comment Chairperson Golisano closed the public forum at 9:15 PM.

**ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

There being no further business, a motion was made by Chairperson Golisano to adjourn the meeting and Vice-Chair Walsh offered a second. By unanimous vote, the meeting was thereupon adjourned at 9:15 PM.

**CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY**

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I am the duly appointed secretary of the Cranbury Township Historic Preservation Commission, and that this document, consisting of 9 pages, constitutes a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular meeting held on August 31, 2021.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name on this day of October 6, 2021.

*Robin Tillou*

Robin Tillou

Recording Secretary

Historic Preservation Commission