

3 Montgomery Road  
Scarsdale, New York 10583  
January 7, 2018

Board of Trustees  
Village Manager  
Village of Scarsdale  
1001 Post Road  
Scarsdale, New York 10583

Re: Historic Preservation

Mayor, Trustees, Village Manager:

This past Friday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, The Scarsdale Inquirer published that the Village Board would be discussing recommendations made by the former members of the Committee for Historic Preservation for that process.

I am writing this letter regarding this renewed discussion of Historic Preservation as a past co-chairman of the Neighborhood Character Committee of the Scarsdale Forum. That committee had become very involved in the not too distant past efforts by the Village to revise its Historic Preservation Law.

To provide background for current Board members, in 2010 the Village Board appointed an Ad Hoc Committee on this topic (I was also a member of that Committee), which issued a report with certain recommendations including those for a revised Law. After the Ad Hoc Committee report, the Village Board commissioned an historic sites survey of the Village that was prepared by a consulting firm to assist the Village Board in developing a new law and was released in March 2012. Later that year, the Village Board did begin work on a potential revised law and a working draft was published.

However, the Village Board believed that the draft law still required much study and a sense of the community on the whole issue. So an interim Law was put in place, which only shortened the appeal process and "fine-tuned" the criteria for preservation. So the revision of the Historic Preservation Law was not completed. I believe Dan Hochvert, current Mayor, was involved as a Trustee during that time, as well as Lucas Meyer, new CHP chair, who was also chair of the CHP at that time.

During that past process, the Neighborhood Character Committee issued a report (dated June 2011) that included a review of the Ad Hoc Committee report and recommendations for a new Historic

Preservation Law. A copy of that report is provided with this letter, as it is still pertinent to the recommendations of the former members of the CHP, which will be discussed shortly. A second report on a review of a final draft of a new Law was planned, but not produced because that final draft Law was not prepared by the Village Board.

Regarding the recommendations by the former members of the CHP:

1) Rolling back one preservation criteria from the current "...the work of a master and [embodying] the distinctive characteristics ..." to "...the work of a master or [embodying] the distinctive characteristics ..." should be adopted. This prior change seems to be a major hindrance in performing the mission of the CHP. In addition, it is part of the fifth point in the recommendations of the June 2011 report of the Neighborhood Character Committee.

2) The preservation process should be more proactive in searching for historic homes. Identifying historic properties, referred to as "landmarking" in advance goes a long way toward effective preservation. It was part of the study and a form for it was advised in the Ad Hoc Committee report. The June 2011 report of the Neighborhood Character Committee covers this topic (second point) with substantial background, including discussion of strong laws recommended by others.

3) Preserving not only single homes but also entire neighborhoods. This provision for Historical Preservation should be considered as it was recommended as a component of a Law in the Ad Hoc Committee Report and in the first point of the recommendations of the June 2011 report of the Neighborhood Character Committee.

4) An outside expert should be found to serve on the CHP. Obtaining expert advice in the form of a "survey" was a recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee, which was adopted by the Village Board after receiving their report. However, this was just a "survey" conducted on a drive-by and limited research basis to obtain an idea of the magnitude of potential historic sites. (A second more studied review was needed.) Nevertheless, this was a step toward expert identification and an initial list for potential landmarking. Much more could be said about these results, but independent expert advice could be the start of a proactive view as well as add support to the process. This recommendation by the former members of the CHP should be considered.

5) Financial hardship should not be a higher priority than preservation. This recommendation by the former members of the CHP is an important one for preservation to be effective. It is tied to being proactive in the process so that land owners may be aware in advance of a “fair return” and whether it will be affected or not. This issue is addressed to some extent in the third point of the recommendations of the June 2011 report of the Neighborhood Character Committee, where the effects of landmarking are addressed including reverences to other background.

Please consider these items in your upcoming review of the recommendations of the former members of the CHP. If there are any questions on these comments, please contact me at 914-723-1626 or [giordanotf@verizon.net](mailto:giordanotf@verizon.net). Thank you.

Sincerely,

Thomas Giordano