
ADDENDUM
TO
SEPTEMBER 18, 2017
BOARD MINUTES

The comments I rise to provide address the homes on Piatt Drive, not the building on Rte 209. At the conclusion of my recitation, I will provide copies of this statement to town officials, and to any newspaper reporters who are present tonight.

There are eyewitnesses in the community willing to testify that they have seen evidence of a safe hiding area in the immediate vicinity of the two houses on Piatt Drive that appears to date to the mid 19th century or before.

As Cuddebackville is not located in an area where such safe hiding areas were needed for tax evasion on imported goods, the most likely reason for such a space is use in the Underground Railroad, as described in the 1881 account of Laura Haviland's work in the Underground Railroad, *A Woman's Life Work*". And, indeed, oral history traditions in the town assert that the hiding area may have been used for the Underground Railroad.

As demolishing these houses and doing site preparation for any subsequent use of the land will, in all likelihood, destroy material culture evidence of the feature described above, I rise to request that any decision on demolishing the houses on Piatt Drive be delayed until the following events can take place.

1. Interviewing and recording oral history accounts of area resident with personal knowledge of the feature.
2. Due diligence by trained historians and preservationists who specialize in Black History in documenting any important features in the area of the houses on Piaatt Drive.
 - a. The Town of Deer Park, County of Orange, and State of New York have historians and offices of Historic Preservation, but their professional staff may or may not be specialists in black history. However, there are others who have this expertise.
 - b. Indeed, there are a number of institutions of higher learning in reasonably close geographic proximity to Orange County that offer Black Studies, African and African American Studies, and Black History programs. In 2017, Rutgers, the State University of NJ was named by US News and World Report the #1 best grad school for African American History. It would require minimal due diligence to contact these institutions to see if they have faculty or students who would be willing to take on a project of documenting
 - i. Whether or not the feature exists,
 - ii. The likelihood that it might have been used for the Underground Railroad, and
 - iii. appropriate actions to either preserve or memorialize its existence in this part of Orange County, NY.
3. If the feature – or the houses—are found to have historic merit or importance, the town could offer them for sale to individuals or organizations willing to commit to appropriately preserving or, memorializing this potential evidence of the Underground Railroad.

We are not demanding preservation of the houses, or memorialization of the feature. We are simply asking that you delay any decision about demolishing these houses until due diligence can be done and any historic significance appropriately documented.

As women were some of the most diligent activists in the abolitionist movement, this has relevance to both women's history and black history.

We see on the news every night that Americans are rising up to demand that African American history and slave history be acknowledged. Do you want to be the town that decided at this critical moment in history to demolish these buildings without even investigating their potential importance in the history of enslaved Americans?

I hope not, and I respectfully request that any decision to demolish be delayed until and unless the board has a determination that there is no historic significance, or has made arrangements for appropriate preservation or memorialization as recommended by professional historians or preservationists.

- **Juanita Leisch Jensen – Amateur historian and Resident of Cuddebackville**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TOWN OF DEERPARK
COUNTY OF ORANGE
STATE OF NEW YORK

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that there has been presented to the Town Board of the Town of Deerpark, County of Orange, State of New York, on or before the 16th day of March, 2017, a report from the Department of Health, County of Orange, State of New York, regarding property located at 2 Piatt Drive, Cuddebackville, New York, identified as Section 22, Block 1, Lot 47, owned by Denise Levitz. The report identifies evidence of rodents on the property, and garbage is improperly stored. As a result, it has been submitted by Department of Health, County of Orange, State of New York, that the condition of the said premises is such that it requires action by the Town of Deerpark.

There has been presented to the Town Board of the Town of Deerpark, County of Orange, State of New York, on or before the 30th day of June, 2017, a report from Alfred A. Fusco, Jr., P.E., Fusco Engineering & Land Surveying, P.C., regarding property located at 2 Piatt Drive, New York, identified as Section 22, Block 1, Lot 47, owned by Denise Levitz. The report identifies the said property as containing an unsafe structure that is in violation of Town Code. In addition, the Town of Deerpark Building Department issued several violation notices to the property owner to repair and/or demolish the structure. The property owner was provided time to comply. No work has been done to correct the violations. As a result, it has been submitted by Alfred A. Fusco, Jr., P.E., Fusco Engineering & Land

Surveying, P.C., that the condition of the said premises is such that it requires action by the Town of Deerpark.

THAT the Town Board of the Town of Deerpark, County of Orange, State of New York, presently intends to authorize the Building Inspector to arrange for the demolition of the structure. That said demolition shall commence within Thirty (30) Days of this Notice and shall be completed within Sixty (60) Days thereafter.

The full text of the report filed by Department of Health, County of Orange, State of New York, is on file for public review in the office of the Town Clerk and/or in the office of the Building Inspector, both of which are located at the Town Hall, Route 209, Huguenot, New York.

The full text of the report filed by Alfred A. Fusco, Jr., P.E., Fusco Engineering & Land Surveying, P.C., is on file for public review in the office of the Town Clerk and/or in the office of the Building Inspector, both of which are located at the Town Hall, Route 209, Huguenot, New York.

THEREFORE, pursuant to Local Law Number 2 of 2011, the Town Board of the Town of Deerpark will hold a public hearing regarding the aforesaid property in the Town Hall, Route 209, Huguenot, New York, at 7:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, on the 18th day of September, 2017, at which time all interested persons shall be heard.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that upon failure to comply with the previously provided Orders and directions to demolish and render said premises safe, the Town Board is authorized to provide for the demolition, and clean-up of said buildings in order to make same safe,

and to assess all expenses thereof against the land on which the dangerous buildings and garbage are located and to institute a special proceeding to collect the costs of cleaning and securing the buildings, including legal expenses.

Dated: August 21, 2017

BY ORDER OF THE TOWN BOARD

FLORENCE T. SANTINI, Town Clerk

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TOWN OF DEERPARK
COUNTY OF ORANGE
STATE OF NEW YORK

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that there has been presented to the Town Board of the Town of Deerpark, County of Orange, State of New York, on or before the 16th day of March, 2017, a report from the Department of Health, County of Orange, State of New York, regarding property located at 6 Piatt Drive, Cuddebackville, New York, identified as Section 22, Block 1, Lot 45, owned by Denise Levitz. The report identifies evidence of rodents on the property, and garbage is improperly stored. As a result, it has been submitted by Department of Health, County of Orange, State of New York, that the condition of the said premises is such that it requires action by the Town of Deerpark.

There has been presented to the Town Board of the Town of Deerpark, County of Orange, State of New York, on or before the 30th day of June, 2017, a report from Alfred A. Fusco, Jr., P.E., Fusco Engineering & Land Surveying, P.C., regarding property located at 6 Piatt Drive, New York, identified as Section 22, Block 1, Lot 45, owned by Denise Levitz. The report identifies the said property as containing an unsafe structure that is unsecured, and which contains debris. In addition, the yard must be cleared and the grass outside the structure cut. The report further identifies evidence of a rodent infestation on site. As a result, it has been submitted by Alfred A. Fusco, Jr., P.E., Fusco Engineering & Land Surveying, P.C., that the

condition of the said premises is such that it requires action by the Town of Deerpark.

THAT the Town Board of the Town of Deerpark, County of Orange, State of New York, presently intends to authorize the Building Inspector to arrange for the security of the building by contract to clean the exterior of the premises so as to reduce the likelihood of rodent or vermin infestation, and to otherwise demolish the building(s) to prevent entry by youths, vandals, vagrants or other trespassers. That said cleanup shall commence within Thirty (30) Days of this Notice and shall be completed within Sixty (60) Days thereafter.

The full text of the report filed by Department of Health, County of Orange, State of New York, is on file for public review in the office of the Town Clerk and/or in the office of the Building Inspector, both of which are located at the Town Hall, Route 209, Huguenot, New York.

THEREFORE, pursuant to Local Law Number 2 of 2011, the Town Board of the Town of Deerpark will hold a public hearing regarding the aforesaid property in the Town Hall, Route 209, Huguenot, New York, at 7:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, on the 18th day of September, 2017, at which time all interested persons shall be heard.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that upon failure to comply with the previously provided Orders and directions to secure and render said premises safe, the Town Board is authorized to provide for the clean-up and securing of said buildings in order to make same safe, and to assess all expenses thereof against the land on which the dangerous buildings and garbage are located and to institute a special proceeding

to collect the costs of cleaning and securing the buildings, including legal expenses.

Dated: August 21, 2017

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PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that there has been presented to the Town Board of the Town of Deerpark, County of Orange, State of New York, on or before the 30th day of June, 2017, a report from Alfred A. Fusco, Jr., P.E., Fusco Engineering & Land Surveying, P.C., regarding property located at 1045 US Route 209, Town of Deerpark, Orange County, New York, identified as Section 22, Block 1, Lot 43, owned by Kathleen Christopherson of 4 Route 59, Nyack, New York. The report identifies the said property as containing an unsafe structure that is unsecured, and which contains debris and brush, as well as having no electric, heat. As a result, it has been submitted by Alfred A. Fusco, Jr., P.E., Fusco Engineering & Land Surveying, P.C., that the condition of the said premises is such that it requires action by the Town of Deerpark.

THAT the Town Board of the Town of Deerpark, County of Orange, State of New York, presently intends to authorize the Building Inspector to arrange for the demolition and removal of the building by contract. That said demolition and removal shall commence within Thirty (30) Days of this Notice and shall be completed within Sixty (60) Days thereafter.

The full text of the report filed by Alfred A. Fusco, Jr., P.E., Fusco Engineering & Land Surveying, P.C., is on file for public review in the office of the Town Clerk and/or in the office of the Building

Inspector, both of which are located at the Town Hall, Route 209, Huguenot, New York.

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PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that upon failure to comply with the previously provided Orders and directions to secure and render said premises safe, the Town Board is authorized to provide for the demolition and removal of said building in order to make same safe, and to assess all expenses thereof against the land on which the dangerous buildings and garbage are located and to institute a special proceeding to collect the costs of cleaning and securing the buildings, including legal expenses.

Dated: August 21, 2017

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FLORENCE T. SANTINI, Town Clerk