

# The PUTNAM COUNTY NEWS and RECORDER

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## Will the Historic Board decide the hospital's fate?

By Tim Greco

Butterfield Hospital was founded in 1925 in a bequest from its namesake, a wealthy local woman whose son had died in childhood after a fall from a horse. If only there had been a hospital nearby, Julia Butterfield believed, her little boy might have been saved.

The 20-year increments of expansion in the 1920s, 1940s or 1960s stopped at Butterfield some 49 years ago and the defunct Butterfield, which closed for good in 1993, has sat in ruins for 19 years.

In a rather sedate meeting on Wednesday evening Butterfield developer Paul Guillaro, project Manager Matt Moran, and Architect Drazen Cackovic, faced the Historic District Review Board, as individual members made a plea for them to save all or part of the "historic" edifice. Review Board chair Al Zgolinski said, "All we are looking for is to reuse the building"

The Historic Board's mission is to look and judge the outsides of buildings and to make sure they fit into the historic character of the village.

After more than 90 minutes of intense but calm back-and-forth, the Historic panel gave Guillaro three options for the dilapidated former hospital and—to no one's surprise— none of the choices included complete demolition.

1) Use the whole building; 2) Demolish the 1963 edition and keep the 1920s and 1940s edition; 3) Keep the 1920s edition.

Guillaro began by talking about the feasibility of the overall building. He observed that the building was roughly 40 to 45,000 square feet, and ceilings are 7 to 9 feet. Some of the things they looked at in the past were trying to relocate the Post Office there, but Guillaro said the space didn't work for them and it probably will not work for any retail.

Chair Al Zgolinski went over a few scenarios and made very clear his sentimentality for the 1963 addition.

Member Kathleen Foley waxed nostalgic about the "60s modern" style of building, while admitting that the hospital is in bad shape: "The 1963 addition can be hard to get your head around because the modern style has grown out of favor, it's a product of its time ...that time period when we were

going to the moon, we were innovating and looking forward and feeling enthusiastic as a nation, that style of architecture represents that hope and that time, we don't consider it pretty anymore. I bet we will consider it differently in another 20 years...."

Member Carolyn Bachan said, "I would disagree slightly with Kathleen on the 1963 addition building embodying the aspirations of the NASA age; it's not one of the best examples." Foley agreed.

Bachan seemed to get right down to the heart of the matter when she said, "This community has a big soreness of being deprived of this hospital and we will never have a hospital again and we know that..." She said she would like to have other health-related services in the old hospital, "so that wound is healed."

It seemed to some that losing a hospital had nothing to do with the abandoned building that sat for 19 years without interest

The *PCN&R* contacted a spokesperson for the Hudson Valley Hospital Center. Asked if they would be interested in providing more services to Cold Spring if more space became available, they responded, "Other than what is at the Lahey Pavilion, we have no interest in expanding our services in the area."

Bachan mentioned the need for office space, noting the area has a seasonal economy driven by tourism: "Wasting space on senior housing is almost criminal because we really don't have a need, not indigenously..."

Zgolinski said, "We are open to a lot of things but there has to be some effort to save some, if not all of the building."

Zgolinski appeared to be attempting to lure Guillaro to his side, as he told him to take a look at historic state and federal district tax credits: "You're talking about 20 percent of the cost." It was unclear if those funds were available, because the building is not on the National Register of Historic Places.

Foley tried to envision a scenario where the Lahey Pavilion could be demolished and moved to space at the hospital, "We've got that Lahey building stuck at the front and it mucks up anyway to re-imagine the 9D façade."

Guillaro said, "The more we talk, the more economically infeasible this thing becomes. I think we can't talk about things that are just not possible. I have a 49-year lease with Hudson Valley Hospital [on the Lahey Pavilion]. They're not moving. I mentioned it to them I tried to talk to them; they like where they are and they are going to stay there."

Guillaro also mentioned he was the landlord in the sense that it is a ground lease and the Lahey Pavilion is in charge of the building. He added that he was not in the health care business and said, "If you want to bring me tenants, I would appreciate it."

Foley then began to question Gulliaro in a prosecutorial manner: "You understand our job is protecting historic resources... It's not our job to find tenants for you, that's the developer's job."

Guillaro: "I'm just trying to tell you unless have tenants, I can't do this."

Foley: "So have you even thought about looking for tenants for any other possibility then senior housing?"

Guillaro: "What am I going to show them?"

Foley: "Concept."

Guillaro: "Most tenants want to move in a reasonable period of time, not, I don't know when I can commit to the building, I don't know when I'll build it, and I don't know when you'll move in."

Foley: "but you understand that historic resources get rehabilitated in this state and across the nation all the time?"

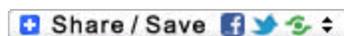
Guillaro said calmly at one point to her, "I really don't appreciate the way you are talking to me. I didn't get into the business yesterday..."

Guillaro continue to say that he would have major problems getting financing for rehabbing the dilapidated structure: "From a practical matter I just don't see it working."

The Board continued to ignore the question of demolition and discussed repurposing the structure, at one point asking Guillaro to save an arch-way and hospital donor plaque. When asked later, Guillaro said he was interested in saving the sentimental parts of the building—including a marble archway and other favorites aspects that the board deems worthy—and then incorporating them into the new building, as a tribute to Mrs. Butterfield.

A meeting was planned for September 19 at 7:30, at which time the Village Board will do a walk-through of the site. The Village has noted that the public can gather to view the exterior, but may not enter the interior due to obvious health and safety reasons.

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## Philipstown's newspaper

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