



[www.hudsonriverheritage.org](http://www.hudsonriverheritage.org)

Happy Holidays from HRH

#### Of Special Interest

HRH REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT  
AT FINAL PUBLIC HEARING

SUSAN WINCHELL-SWEENEY  
REMARKS

DEBORAH BARROW  
PRESENTATION

# HRH HOLIDAY UPDATE

Newsletter Date December 21, 2005

## HRH Representatives Present at Final Public Hearing

Deborah Barrow, President of Hudson River Heritage (HRH), and Susan Winchell-Sweeney, one of the consultants hired by HRH on behalf of the Friends of Kingston Waterfront (FoKW) coalition, presented to the City of Kingston Planning Board our concerns on December 14, 2005 at the final public hearing on "The Landing" proposed development.

At the public hearing, both HRH speakers presented concerns about the massive development proposed by AVR for the waterfront in Kingston. The presentations they gave are included in this newsletter.

HRH has been providing the City of Kingston Planning Board a copy of all of our presentations given at

public hearings on "The Landing." Prior to January 17, 2006, the end of the public comment period, HRH will present the City of Kingston Planning board with reports from our consultants, including Dr. Laurie Rush, Archaeologist, and a comprehensive detailing of our concerns.



**Please consider a gift to HRH for the growing fund in support of long-term heritage advocacy for local communities.**

Donations can be made through our website at

<http://www.hudsonriverheritage.org/> or by mail at:

Hudson River Heritage  
PO Box 287  
Rhinebeck, NY 12572

## Susan Winchell-Sweeney Remarks

My name is Susan Winchell-Sweeney and I'm a member of the cultural resource team, under contract to Hudson River Heritage, doing research on behalf of the Friends of Kingston Waterfront. I'd like to summarize our findings and recommendations tonight, to be followed soon by a written report from archaeologist Laurie Rush, PhD, the head of our team.

Dr. Rush is a private consultant and chief archaeologist for the US Army at Fort Drum in western New York. She can't attend tonight's hearing because she's in Washington DC as a member of a task force on Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, meeting on behalf of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Section 106 is the Federal law governing evaluation of properties to protect their cultural resources. Dr. Rush has reviewed the archaeological section of the DGEIS by Steve Oberon, comments on it by Doug Mackey of the State Historic Preservation Office, an archaeologist's survey of Sailor's Cove, National Register Nomination drafts by Ponckhockie residents Kevin McEvoy and Barbara Epstein, and data I assembled from the State site files.

Dr. Rush's report will emphasize the

benefits of cooperation between the City of Kingston, the developer of the Landing, and the heritage community. She urges the City of Kingston to contact the Native American tribes, the Mohicans and Delaware, who have ancestral interests in this area, in a government to government capacity, asking whether they wish to participate in the decision-making process. The earlier such consultation takes place, the better for everyone.

As the HRH cultural resource team noted at the October hearing, prehistoric Indian burials have been found on the Landing property or sufficiently near to it that other graves may be threatened. The Kingston site may or may not have been disturbed by mining and manufacturing, but human skeletons may still exist nearby. Topsoil spoil heaps could contain human bones or artifacts originally placed with them. The clay banks may have been a resource for pottery manufacture in prehistoric times and could also contain graves. Thick deposits of brick may have covered prehistoric Native American burial or habitation sites, but the Landing's archaeologist has not done testing to see whether they do. In fact, due to the long-term rise in sea level that has affected the Hudson

shoreline, there could be submerged prehistoric sites on the Kingston waterfront.

Dr. Rush's recommendations will call for detailed mapping with geo-archaeological information to reconstruct pre-mine topography at the Landing and adjacent properties.

As the HRH team noted here in October, the developer's archaeologist in the DGEIS lists nine prehistoric sites within a mile of the proposed Landing. Now we can say that there are more than twenty Native American archaeological sites on record at the State Historic Preservation Office. Here is a map, with copies for the Planning Board, which shows the "sensitive areas" that serve as buffers to keep confidential the exact places in which the sites are located. Note the relative concentration along the Kingston Waterfront in comparison to the adjacent portion of Rhinebeck, which is typical of site distributions over most of the Hudson Valley near the river.

Dr. Rush's report will emphasize the importance of considering activity on the Kingston waterfront in the historical period. The mining and manufacturing that took place there, **(Continued, p. 2)**

## Deborah Barrow Presentation



View of "The Landing" property

In his *History of Kingston*, which he finished before his death last year, revered local author Alf Evers wrote: "Since the early years of the nineteenth century, the Hudson River and its valley has stood in the top rank of America's almost 'sacred places' for its scenic beauty, its historic interest and its economic use to industry and business." Throughout this book, Mr. Evers refers to the City of Kingston's critical leadership role in the Hudson Valley.

Today, this planning board has in front of it a development proposal for this "sacred place" that is so enormous in its impact that it will determine the community character of both the City of Kingston and the surrounding Mid-Hudson Valley for generations to come.

This is a heavy burden indeed.

It is my goal tonight to help the planning board members understand that Hudson River Heritage believes that their decisions on this project will determine whether or not the things that define our

lives in Kingston and the Mid-Hudson Valley - a connection to nature and natural beauty, a tradition of 300 years of architectural distinction, open spaces and panoramic views, a backdrop of living history, in other words, our "Mid-Hudson Valley sense of place" - will evolve organically and sensitively, or will be abruptly set on a course of suburbanization characterized by overbuilding, sprawl, traffic, crowding, and the kind of rootless, bland, Anywhere, USA kind of growth that has stolen the uniqueness from formerly heritage-rich communities from coast to coast.

It wouldn't take much to turn the Mid-Hudson Valley into Anyplace, USA.

All you need to do is to put in a few monster housing developments with no connection to the area's sense of place and community character.

And down that road lies the destruction of the Hudson Valley renaissance, which has raised property values, given birth to a growing economy, and is based on the arts, history and heritage tourism, technology, education, artisanal and other farming, the culinary arts and other sustainable elements. Not to mention a quality of life that attracts the best and the brightest from the world over.

If we wanted to live in northern New Jersey, we'd be living there.

If we wanted to live in Orange County, we'd be living there.

If we wanted to live in Anywhere, USA, we'd be living there.

All of those places are nice.

But we want to live here, in Kingston. Here, in Rhinecliff. Here, in Saugerties, in Red Hook. And in all of the fragile, yet precious cities, towns, villages and hamlets that make the Mid-Hudson Valley so incredibly unique.

The City of Kingston, with its intact neighborhoods, solid housing stock and location, location, location, is sitting in the cat bird seat of the Hudson Valley renaissance. With the right kind of growth leadership, this planning board can insure that Kingston takes its rightful place as the brightest jewel in the Mid-Hudson Valley crown. With its street after street after street and neighborhoods of solid, historic, homes on mature tree-lined streets, Kingston could, through vision and incentives, practically solve our region's shortage of affordable housing for our citizens. And with its remaining mile or so of commanding water frontage, Kingston could demand development that attracts and adds to the region, and doesn't detract from it and its history.

Kingston doesn't need to settle for cheapening, character-free, sense of place-violating suburbanization.

HRH asks that the planning board consider these and the other crucial merits presented here this evening in determining Kingston's future.

Thank you for your consideration.

### Susan Winchell-Sweeney Remarks, Continued

starting in the mid -19<sup>th</sup> century, were vital to the City and well beyond. The descendants of the miners, brick-makers, and other laborers deserve a part in the decision-making process here. Their memories and memorabilia have a place in understanding the potential significance of the property. These local residents should have a role in planning. Indeed, Hudson River Heritage would like to recommend that alternative manufacturing be part of any development on the waterfront so that jobs for local residents are another beneficial outcome.

One final note, Dr. Rush has noticed

language in the DGEIS that suggests the developer might attempt a "jurisdictional approach" to avoid the need for wetlands permitting from the Army Corps of Engineers, which would necessitate a Section 106 review pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act. We urge the Planning Board to require that a full and in-depth review take place, involving the Army Corps of Engineers, as well as Native American tribes, descendants of the waterfront workers, and the heritage community as a whole.

Many thanks for considering these recommendations.

**GET  
INVOLVED**

***SIGN OUR  
PETITION***

**[www.petitiononline.com/hrh/  
2005/petition.html](http://www.petitiononline.com/hrh/2005/petition.html)**