



## Of Special Interest

THE HRH MISSION:  
PRESERVATION ADVOCACY  
AND EDUCATION

COMMENT PERIOD  
EXTENDED/MORE  
HEARINGS

REMARKS BY WILLIAM RUIZ

## The HRH Mission: Preservation Advocacy and Education



*View of the Landing Property*

I attended the Public Hearing on the Landing proposed development on October 12, 2005 at Kingston City Hall. The meeting convened at 6 p.m. and adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

For me, this hearing crystallized the importance of the HRH mission. HRH was there – Operations Manager Audrey Reifler, Board Members Elizabeth Ryan and Christopher Lindner, Members Wint Aldrich, Alan Neumann, Kathy Hammer, Lin Fagan. William Ruiz, a member of the cultural resource team hired by HRH, delivered a strong presentation on the importance of careful investigation and avoidance of archaeological sites found on the Landing and Sailors' Cove properties.

The October 12<sup>th</sup> public hearing was not my first, it may have been my longest, and it will not be the last time I stand up slightly numb from sitting on a courthouse bench for hours. Despite the seating arrangements, I was humbled to hear so many Kingston

residents from diverse parts of the city speak in opposition to the proposed Landing project. Many spoke of the need to strengthen the city's weak infrastructure, to attract industry and create jobs for the people currently residing in Kingston BEFORE bringing in 3,000 to 5,000 more people. Several pleaded for the maintenance and protection of their historic neighborhoods.

Yes, 10% of the presentations supported the current plans for the Landing project. Yes, there were several strident attacks on the involvement of "elitist outsiders". These attacks were repeatedly countered by Kingston residents who affirmed that HRH, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Riverkeeper, Sierra Club, Sustainable Hudson Valley, and Scenic Hudson had been invited to assist local Kingston preservation groups. Many people devoted part of their allotted five minutes to defend the right of free speech. Others spoke of people living along the Hudson as belonging to one

community with a responsibility to work together. When we stand up for the well-being of the river district, we are standing up for the quality of our own lives, now and into the future.

The Hudson River was central to the lives of prehistoric people also. HRH consultants found information on a 1940's archaeological excavation of the Kingston site, an unusually large Native American settlement located in the vicinity of the proposed development in the 1500's. The size of the Kingston site is amazing; the fact that Native people chose to live in a place of natural beauty, replete with natural resources, is not.

- Susan Hinkle, HRH Events Coordinator

The text from the presentation given by William Ruiz follows.

## Comment Period Extended/More Hearings

The Comment Period on the proposed Landing development has been extended to Tuesday, January 17, 2006. Two additional Public Hearings have been scheduled:

November 16, 2005 and December 14, 2005

6 pm

KINGSTON CITY HALL, 420 Broadway, Kingston

For more information visit:

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## Remarks by William Ruiz

My name is William Ruiz. I'm a member of the cultural resource team retained by Hudson River Heritage, HRH.

Last month you heard from HRH about the superficial investigation of historic and archaeological sites at the Landing proposed development. We quoted and explained a recent letter to the Kingston Planning Board from the State Historic Preservation Office. It called into question numerous aspects of the historical and archaeological section of the DGEIS.

Tonight, the HRH cultural resource team would like to add two new pieces of information that we have unearthed by checking the State files and reports on the archaeology of Kingston.

The DGEIS lists 9 prehistoric sites within a mile radius of the Landing property. It does not discuss their importance.

Here's our first piece of new information: the State files indicate that many more prehistoric Native American sites are on record within a mile. Most of these sites are at the confluence of the Rondout Creek, actually a sizeable river, and the Hudson, a major river and tidal estuary. Such a conjunction of two streams is, and was, in the category of greatest resource potential for people whose livelihood came from their natural surroundings.

Tho' the DGEIS did not discuss the several sites it listed, the HRH cultural resource team would like to elaborate on one. In official State records, its name is: the Kingston Site. Here's our second piece of new "old" info: in his book published in 1952, the State Archaeologist characterized these vestiges as representing the largest late prehistoric site in eastern New York outside the Mohawk Valley. The Kingston site had

a refuse deposit that contained pottery the style of which dates the site to around 500 years ago, a century before people from the Old World arrived here. The Kingston site contained two human burials: one a child and the other a man, who lay on his side facing southeast.

Information about the Kingston site's location is somewhat vague, perhaps to protect it from looting, and a bit contradictory. There's a fairly good chance that it, and related sites, are located on the proposed Landing property, but not necessarily in the mined out areas as the DGEIS would have it.

Thank you for giving careful and thorough consideration to the area's cultural resources, historic and archaeological. HRH hopes for much more on both.