

December 4, 2020

Report of the Ossining Village Historian

RE: Honorary Street naming application for Joanne Tall

My research into the contributions made to the village by Joanne Tall was conducted by consulting the following sources: Telephone interview with the applicant and husband of Joanne Tall, Scott Kamen; Online memorial posted on Facebook by Mayor Gearity, with review of subsequent comments by residents and former colleagues; Written statement by Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) Chair Adam Markovics; Written statement from former HPC member James Trapasso; and the online obituary of Joanne Tall, published in The New York Times. The following is a summary of my findings.

Residency in Ossining: Joanne Tall lived in Ossining for 30 years, from 1990 until her passing on March 13, 2020. It was important for her to live in a place that was diverse, which is one of the many reasons she chose Ossining. Joanne and her husband, Scott purchased their family home at 4 Liberty Street, located in our historic Sparta District. It is there that they raised their two daughters (Abigail and Hannah), restored their historic home, and opened a family business: Kamen Tall Architects, PC, which they established in 2010, and is still in operation today. As a principal architect, Joanne specialized in historic preservation, residential design, and adaptive-reuse. A brilliant architect with a public servant's heart, she began her 30 years of service to the Village of Ossining after a few months of settling in her new home.

Village Contributions and Community Projects:

- Contributed and consulted to the Village of Ossining, New York Significant Sites and Structures Guide (April 2010) -resource with information on historic structures and sites in the village.
- Curated and executed the installation of the "Museum in the Streets" project with former Mayor Miguel Hernandez. A historical and cultural walking tour of our historic downtown district.
- Served on the board of Interfaith Council for Action (IFCA). Joanne participated in the rehabilitation and repaired several of the buildings/housing units in the Village. She lent her expertise in architecture to the organization at no cost, as she strongly believed that the organization should spend the project money on the project, not on overhead cost. To help offset the cost, she offered guidance on code enforcement, fire safety, and other areas of her expertise. Often offering materials and making samples at her own expense. She had a strong desire to make affordable housing safe, functional, and beautiful.
- Member of the local NAACP branch
- Member of the Ossining Historical Society
- Served on the Board of Directors of the American Caribbean Maritime Foundation

- Volunteered at WestCops Head Start Program as a tutor. Also, introduced the children to the field of architecture by teaching them about the structure of their own homes.
- Worked with First Baptist Church on the restoration of the bell tower. Continued work with the church on further architectural pursuits and finding funding sources for the projects.
- Participated in the review of Ossining's emergency evacuation plan. Particularly the emergency bus stops and routes that would take residents to safety in case of an evacuation.
- The Ossining Bank for Savings, Ossining, NY (2009) - participated in the redevelopment team, providing a plan for restoration of the exterior envelope and providing the conceptual design for the adaptive reuse of this historic building as a multi-faceted food and entertainment establishment.

Village Commissions and Boards

- Member, Village of Ossining Architectural Guidelines Committee – Contributing to the Significant Sites and Structures Guide. The Village publication that highlights Village historic buildings and structures.
- Served on the village Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) for over 25 years, since its inception. Serving as the chair of the Commission for several of those years, Joanne presided over hundreds of applications in her tenor, with compassion. Her goal was to protect the historical and architectural character of our village while being sensitive to the desires of the owners. Both Mr. Markovics and Mr. Trapasso expressed that Joanne's passion for historic preservation was palpable and contagious. She inspired them to be more vigilant in protecting and preserving our historic structures. Adam, the current Chair of the HPC expressed he learned a great deal from Joanne and her passing is a great loss to the community.

Joanne's unparalleled passion and devotion to the community and historical preservation has had an undeniable effect on Ossining. She helped devise many creative, historically sensitive solutions to projects in landmarked districts in the Village, and she spearheaded public education programs aimed at raising awareness of the historically and architecturally significant buildings in Ossining. She cared deeply about the Village and residents and gave selflessly of her time and expertise to the entire community. She rarely turned down an opportunity to contribute to a project that benefited the Village and its citizens. That devotion left a lasting impact on everyone she met. Through her project dedication, attention to detail, and her passion and skill in architecture, Joanne Tall was an integral figure in Ossining's legacy.

Village of Ossining Awards/Citations

February 19, 1998, former Mayor Thomas Cambariere and the Village of Ossining Board of Trustees awarded Joanne a 'Certificate of Recognition for her Significant and Meritorious Service for the Village of Ossining'.

January 2001, The Jug Tavern Board of Directors awarded a copy of the historic map of Sparta for Joanne's work involving the preservation of the Sparta Historic District.

June 18, 2013, former Mayor William Hanauer and the Village of Ossining Board of Trustees awarded Joanne a proclamation for exemplary contributions to the community and outstanding services to the quality of life in Ossining. The Proclamation also acknowledged her service as Chairwoman of the Historic Preservation Committee.

January 16, 2019, current Mayor Victoria Gearity and the Village of Ossining Board of Trustees awarded Joanne a 'Proclamation for her work on the Historic Preservation Commission since its inception more than twenty-five years ago'. Joanne was Chair of the committee for several of those years.

Signage history of proposed Street: Currently, there is no honorary street signage at the proposed street (Liberty Place). The applicant requests the honorary street name, "Joanne Tall Way".