

DEAR MR. ASTORINO:

This letter is to unequivocally support the preservation and protection not only of Warwick's most visible and revered prehistoric community landmark-a rare twenty foot glacial monolith-but also of the entire nine-acre West Street parcel which crosses the Wawayanda Creek, a key estuary of the Wallkill River.

We should thank Alfred Cammisa and associates for their recent but brief archeological survey of several sections of this parcel. Impressively, their probes discovered some fifty Native American stone artifacts, including knives, axes, scrapers, fishnet sinkers, arrowheads and rare projectiles which likely were fabricated over a period extending nearly 5000 years. Some were the products of trade along ancient interregional routes throughout New York State, New Jersey and into New England and beyond.

These astounding finds in addition to others collected near the soil's surface over many decades suggest that this was a site of extraordinary human activity which included the production of finely-crafted stone tools utilized on site in the hunting of wild game, the catching of aquatic life from the Wawayanda and in the processing of fish and meat.

Cammisa's team also found rare quartz crystals which further research may indicate this was a gathering point for spiritual and social ceremonies. Not surprisingly, European settlers referred to this nearly 20 foot high glacial monolith as 'Pulpit Rock' and their pastors reputedly held summer outdoor religious services there in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Moreover, the parcel is only a few hundred yards from the prehistoric Lenape Indian village of Mistucky and its two stone quarries and burial grounds. It is also situated within proximity to three major interregional Indian trails extending between what is today Newburgh and Philadelphia, Warwick and the Delaware River, and Warwick and Bayonne, New Jersey.

Edward J. Lenik, prolific author and one of America's leading authorities on the Lenape of our area argues that *"Pulpit Rock was the abode of Manitou, a force, spirit or energy. The rock was a source of spiritual power and the home of supernatural beings. It was a place where Indian people conducted prayer ceremonies or rituals. Pulpit Rock is a sacred place and should be preserved"*.

Given its importance to hundreds of generations of people in our valley and beyond it would be a travesty if this parcel were disturbed by heavy earth moving equipment before a more thorough archeological probe is undertaken. This is also an important cultural landmark and I would suggest that the applicant be required to examine the considerable literature by experts on the peoples who occupied this site, including their social and political organization and their religious beliefs.

Clearly, this scenically awesome prehistoric monument and its surrounds is eligible for nomination to the National and State Registers of Historic Places and should be fully visible and accessible to the public especially to the thousands of students who daily pass by this site on their way to the three neighborhood schools only a few hundred yards away.

Dr. Richard W. Hull
Professor Emeritus of history
New York University
Official Warwick Town Historian