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Clarendon Stone Store to be Sold for \$1.00 To Buyer Who Presents Best Plan

(January 24, 2012) The Landmark Society of Western New York and preservation advocates in the Town of Clarendon are pleased to announce significant progress in efforts to save the 1836 Clarendon Stone Store at the heart of the hamlet.

At a recent regular Town Board meeting the Clarendon Town Board agreed to sell the stone store property for \$1 to the person who presents the best plan meeting their criteria. They also authorized the Old Stone Store Preservation Committee (OSSPC) and The Landmark Society to begin marketing the property.

The Old Stone Store, as it is affectionately known by the locals, was built in 1836 and operated as a general store until 1975. Since that time it has been used as an apartment building. Sitting in the most prominent location in the hamlet of Clarendon, it is one of the oldest remaining structures in the Town and a unique surviving example of an early 19th century commercial building, executed in Medina sandstone.

The building has been vacant since 2007 and is now owned by the Town. Lacking a use for the building, plans were made to demolish it. In partnership with The Landmark Society, a group of local citizens gathered in July, 2011 to advocate for saving the building. The Board granted them one year to market the property and find a new owner who will rehabilitate the property and bring it back on the tax rolls.

Since last July, the OSSPC, under the leadership of local citizen Erin Anheier and Town Historian Melissa Ierlan, has spearheaded local efforts to clean out the building, make immediate necessary

repairs, and have the property surveyed. With a \$500 donation from The Landmark Society to kickstart the project, the OSSPC also raised funds to hire an architect to prepare a report of the building's condition and recommended repairs.

"The Old Stone Store is a cherished landmark in Clarendon," said Wayne Goodman, Executive Director of The Landmark Society. "Helping the town save the store and find appropriate use for it is part of our preservation mission that we have practiced for 75 years."

With assistance from Landmark Society staff, OSSPC members also completed the research and paperwork for a nomination to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The nomination has been submitted to the NY State Historic Preservation Office and is pending approval by the NY State Review Board, which meets in March.

Listing in the National Register of Historic Places would make state and federal tax credits available for up to 40% of the cost of rehabilitation if the building is made into an income producing property.

For a plan to be considered by the Town Board it must include the planned use of the building, the details of the rehabilitation plan and the timeline for completion of the plan. It must return the front façade of the building to a more historically appropriate appearance and restore the building to a condition allowing a Certificate of Occupancy.

The Town Board will give preference to a plan for the building to have commercial space or offices on the first floor and the same or storage on the second floor. An alternate use would be commercial or office space on the first floor and an owner occupied apartment on the second floor. They would also consider conversion of both floors to a single family home. Multiple apartments will not be considered. Exact legal terms of the sale still need to be worked out. The building contains approximately 3200 square feet.

For further information, go to townofclarendon.org and click on "Save The Old Stone Store." There you will find more details including the study done by Bero Architecture and the first draft of the National Register nomination which includes historical information and photos.