

Final Report

# An Assessment of the Heritage Tourism Potential

of

Olde Stone House Historic Village,  
Washington Township in Sewell, NJ



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Prepared for  
Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission

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## Chapter 1. Introduction and Overview

This report is the culmination of a brief assessment of the heritage tourism potential of Olde Stone House Village in Washington Township in Sewell, NJ. It provides advice to the Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission (WTHPC) volunteers as they work with the companion nonprofit corporation, the Friends of the Old Stone House Village (OSHV), to continue to improve the Old Stone House Historic Village as a heritage tourism destination.

### a. Funding provided by the New Jersey Historic Trust

This project has been funded in part by a grant from the Garden State Historic Preservation Trust Fund, which is administered by the New Jersey Historic Trust.

### b. What is interpretation?

Freeman Tilden, whose book *Interpreting Our Heritage* has been the bible for historic site interpreters for almost two generations, defines interpretation as “an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.”<sup>1</sup> In the first edition of his book published in 1957, Tilden laid out his six principles for quality interpretation of historic, natural, or archeological places. These serve as a reminder of the basic ideals for educating visitors about historic sites.

I. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.

II. Information, as such, is not Interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.

III. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.

IV. The chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.

V. Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase; and

VI. Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be

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<sup>1</sup> Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, Chapel Hill NC; University of North Carolina Press, 1957.

a dilution of the presentation to adults but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program.<sup>2</sup>

Interpretation, at its essence, is the art of telling a good story. But being a skilled raconteur is not enough. “If you only list a few facts, you aren’t interpreting your historic site and the people who lived there – you’re just describing it. Interpretation, on the other hand, helps visitors connect with what they are experiencing. Interpretation does not just teach what something is, but what it means. That’s the essence of a good story.”<sup>3</sup>

Historic sites need to be interpreted so that “visitors can have satisfying experiences. These experiences can be emotional, physical, intellectual, or inspirational. A person’s response and connection to the heritage resource is often the most important element in the long-term protection of the resource. Creating a positive, memorable response in visitors will translate to a positive response to preservation and history.”<sup>4</sup>

The New Jersey Historic Trust provides guidance about what historic site interpretation needs to be:

- Accessible and understandable
- Grounded in historical facts (authentic)
- Connect people to place
- Focused on protection and preservation
- Provide visitors with information and education, and
- Coordinated with other heritage tourism programs.<sup>5</sup>

For the purposes of this Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential for the Olde Stone House Village, we supply recommendations that follow the NJ Historic Trust’s guidance about historic site interpretation.

### **c. Brief history and current conditions**

Local historians have long been interested in the historic architecture of Washington Township, NJ. Today, OSHV is a collection of buildings that were saved by the Township Historical

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<sup>2</sup> Joan Berkey, National Register Nomination for the George (Jr.) and Sarah Morgan House, Sewell NJ, accessed January 14, 2020, [https://nj.gov/dep/hpo/1identify/nr\\_nomntns\\_11\\_08\\_2018\\_srb\\_drafts/GLO\\_Washington\\_Twp\\_George\\_Morgan\\_stone\\_hse\\_DRAFT\\_2018-08-13\\_WEB.pdf](https://nj.gov/dep/hpo/1identify/nr_nomntns_11_08_2018_srb_drafts/GLO_Washington_Twp_George_Morgan_stone_hse_DRAFT_2018-08-13_WEB.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Lancaster County Planning Commission, “Telling our Story: Interpretation Manual for Heritage Partners,” no date, accessed January 15, 2020, <http://www.interpretivesolutions.com/project/telling-our-stories-an-interpretation-manual-for-heritage-partners/>

<sup>4</sup> New Jersey Historic Trust, Historic Site Interpretation and Education, <https://www.state.nj.us/dca/njht/applguid/Site%20Interpretation%20with%20illustrations.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 2.

Society in the 1970s and 1980s. The centerpiece of the OSHV is the Morgan House ca. 1765, a vernacular stone structure in the Georgian style. The other four wood frame buildings were moved from their original locations when they were threatened with demolition to the Quay Family Farm. The Quay Family collected the original Bunker Hill Presbyterian Church ca. 1849, the 1864 Turnersville Post Office and Court House, the Quay Farmhouse ca. 1825, and the Blackwood Railroad Station ca. 1891. The frame buildings were later moved to the OSHV site in the 1980s. Moving historic buildings to create a village setting was a common activity during this early period of the preservation movement. The moved buildings are located on a portion of the original site of the George (Jr.) and Sarah Morgan House. Only the Morgan House and its brick outbuilding are listed on the National Register. The National Register parcel is only .21 of an acre of the 6.2-acre lot, with 1000-foot frontage along Egg Harbor Road, according to the National Register Nomination.<sup>6</sup>

The Morgan House, on its original setting, is significant for its architecture. The Morgan House is a well-preserved vernacular example of the Georgian style. The house exhibits important architectural elements in its exterior, particularly its stone façade laid in ashlar pattern with stonework quoins. Restoration in the 1980s reproduced a beehive oven. The outbuilding is a one-story, gable front outbuilding, built in the 19th century and constructed of uncoursed ironstone and brick. The Morgan House is in the midst of structural repairs funded by the New Jersey Historic Trust. In general, two of the four moved buildings are in good condition. The Quay House and the Bunker Hill Church are in need of repair. The Post Office and the Railroad Station have been completely renovated through Commission fundraising efforts.

#### **d. Working relationships**

The WTHPC is organized by Washington Township, the members of the Commission are appointed by the Mayor and Township Council each year. The Commission has a long list of activities, but it concentrates on two of their activities.

e. Report at least annually to the township governing body on the state of historic preservation in the township and recommend measures to improve same.

j. The Historic Preservation Commission shall be responsible for the care and maintenance of the buildings on the Township Historic Site known as the Olde Stone House Village but shall not be required to produce Certificate Appropriateness in the general upkeep of the Village.

Commission members are actively involved in planning and executing large events at the Village. Five events are held throughout the visitor season which runs from April through October. Most of the events have a fundraising component.

The Washington Township Parks and Recreation Department provides grounds maintenance including cutting the grass regularly. The Commissioners alert the Township Council about

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<sup>6</sup> Berkey, National Register Nomination.

restoration and maintenance needs, so they can be included in the Township budget.

Commission member Dr. McCart has written numerous successful grant applications to various government funding entities for both programming and capital grants in the last five years. Currently she is managing two grants from the New Jersey Historic Trust. It is extraordinary to have a volunteer manage a capital project grant of any magnitude. The Township is fortunate to have such talent among the Historic Preservation Commission members.

In 2011, the Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission created the Friends of the Olde Stone House Village to be a companion charitable entity 501 ( c ) (3) organization. The Friends are a group of volunteers who help with funding and with manpower as needed by the Commission. The Friends purpose statement includes maintain an association of persons interested in the preservation and maintenance of the Olde Stone House Village and/or any other historic sites as directed by the Historic Preservation Commission of Washington Township. Key objectives will be to develop funding and otherwise to assist in keeping these historic sites available to the public.

The Friends have applied for and accept grants on behalf of the Olde Stone House Village that must be submitted by a public charity. The Friends have submitted successful grant applications over the years for programming projects.

Currently the Friends host a website about the Olde Stone House Village

<https://www.friendsoftheoldestonehouse.org/about.html>

In 2019, the Friends of the OSHV began opening the Village on a regular basis on the Second Saturday of the month. The Friends offer docent led, guided tours of the buildings on the scheduled Saturdays and at other events as planned.

#### **e. Prioritizing projects**

We are providing many recommendations for the further development of OSHV as a visitor managed attraction in this report. These recommendations are meant for the WTHPC as an all-volunteer operation, as it exists today and for the near future. We are making the basic assumption that the WTHPC wishes to further develop the OSHV as a regional visitor attraction and bring more visitors to the site.

Each building would continue to be well maintained and restored. There would be high quality regular programming for visitors on select weekends, with regular posted public hours at least once a month. These recommended projects will help WTHPC to grow and further advance the OSHV's development so that more visitors can have an enriching educational experience.

These projects are not strictly organized, meaning one must be completed before the next. Rather, some projects may find eager volunteer leaders sooner than others, as volunteer leadership is critical to the execution of these recommendations. Therefore, we have listed recommended projects in just two categories: Short- and Long-Term projects. We hope that the

Short-Term projects would be completed before embarking on the Long-Term projects.

### **Funding interpretation and capital projects**

Most of these projects require outside grant funding. The WTHPC has had considerable grant writing success over the last five years and has the skills to raise the needed matching funds to implement their grants. Dr. McCart's skills as a grant writer are well known and highly appreciated by the WTHPC. Dr. McCart also administers grants from the New Jersey Historic Trust and other funders on behalf of the OSHV. The New Jersey Historic Trust remains an excellent grant prospect for many of the planning and construction projects we recommend. We have identified other possible funders for projects in this report.

The WTHPC may want to have a frank discussion about the order in which they wish to undertake these projects so that requests to the Township for financial support and the OSHV fundraising efforts can be aligned for matching grant purposes.

### **Volunteer leadership**

The work ahead requires the same sustained volunteer leadership that the WTHPC has exhibited over the last five years. Based on the OSHV's considerable fundraising successes, we believe the current volunteers are entirely capable of implementing all of these recommendations without hiring part time staff or consultants to serve as staff. The WTHPC, along with the Friends of OSHV, seems to have a core group of people who are highly motivated to see the OSHV move further towards its potential as a regional visitor attraction. While the current base of volunteers may be sufficient to implement current recommendation, it is always important to continue to recruit new volunteers.

### **How this report is organized**

This assessment report is organized in five chapters: Introduction, Short Term Projects, Long-Term Projects, Conclusion, and Credits. The report also includes four appendices. The first is an updated visitor services map showing the location of various visitor amenities, including parking, gas stations, ATM machines, restaurants, etc. located within a mile of the OSHV. Other appendices are the Updated General Visitor Brochure, the Final Current Conditions Memo, and a table of contents for an Interpretive Plan and Furnishings Plan.

## Chapter 2. Short Term Projects

- a) Start an e-newsletter
- b) Gather more documentary information about the four moved historic buildings through an intensive level survey
- c) Fund and install interpretive signage for all five buildings
- d) Create an OSHV website or expand current Friends of the OSHV website
- e) Increase the number of days open per month with programming for the kitchen/herb garden
- f) Expand social media promotion
- g) Plan and install permanent handicapped accessible restrooms

### **a) Start an e-newsletter**

We recommend creating an e-newsletter for the OSHV to promote its events, highlight the once a month Second Saturday activities, and call for additional volunteers. We recommended using Mail Chimp, a free bulk email platform with customizable templates. The WTHPC should consider a monthly mailing to keep your followers up to date on activities. This will require having one person in charge as editor of the e-newsletter. We understand that the volunteer position has been advertised but no one has yet stepped into the role. The editor's responsibilities would include gathering photos, articles, and emails on a regular basis for the monthly mailing. It would be ideal if the mailings were once a month on a fixed day, such as the first of the month.

The content for the newsletter could be three to five short (under 750 word) articles with photos about upcoming events, volunteer job descriptions for specific roles needed by the WTHPC, stories about specific volunteers in action, and photos of recent special events. The e-newsletter could ask readers for information on the history of the other building including old photos. The e-newsletter should include a link to the email sign up form, so that if the newsletter is forwarded recipients can easily join the mailing list. We recommend that each newsletter be posted on the Facebook and Instagram pages, the Friends of the OSHV website, and the HPC website.

Like many other email platforms (Constant Contact, Emma, etc.), Mail Chimp has a free component if the number of emails kept on the platform is under 2,000 contacts <sup>7</sup> Once the mailing list exceeds 2,000 recipients, the organization must pay a modest price of \$9.99 per

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<sup>7</sup><https://mailchimp.com/?msclkid=e7b5bcee603719a65ca5e2e859964c5c&gclid=CJjFmOin1uYCFTEGiAkd014IXA&gclsrc=ds>.

month based on annual billing. Most of our clients are still using the free version because they have not collected over 2,000 contacts. There are other plans with higher monthly or annual fees. These are paid for by credit card for each mailing. There is a discount for nonprofits and charities of 15%.

### **Regularly collect email addresses**

There are many opportunities to collect email addresses to add to the e-newsletter data base. There should be sign up forms on both the FOSHV and WTHPC websites. A volunteer table should be available and staffed by a volunteer at each event and Second Saturday activity at which email addresses can be collected. This table should have the general visitor brochure, and any volunteer job descriptions currently being solicited. See below for further information about volunteer job descriptions. Volunteers can ask people to provide their name, email address, and zip code to keep up to date on FOSHV activities. The newsletter should also be posted to the official Facebook page each month, with a link to sign up for the e-newsletter on the Friends website.

One volunteer will need to take the paper signup sheets and enter this information into the Mail Chimp database after each event or Second Saturday activity to keep the mailing list growing. This might be a good volunteer job description to solicit in the coming months.

### **Gather more documentary information about the four moved historic buildings through an intensive level survey**

The following written materials were shared with us as background about the buildings of the Olde Stone House Village:

- The Historical Society of Washington Township, *Memories of Washington Township*, Volume No. 1, Gloucester County, NJ: The Historical Society of Washington Township, 1971. Includes a brief chapter on Bunker Hill Presbyterian Church by Joan B. Michael.
- Constance McCart, Ed. D, for the Friends of the Margaret E. Heggan Free Public Library, *Washington Township, Gloucester Township, Images of America*, Charleston SC: Arcadia Press, 2009.
- Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission, 11 Annual Classic Car Show, April 27, 2019 Program Book.
- Consilia Kaiser, *Ye Old Stone House, Township of Washington, Gloucester County, C. 1730 A Brief History*. 1986.

We also electronically received the following information including the “room books” for each of the buildings.

- Joan Berkey, National Register Nomination for the George (Jr.) and Sarah Morgan House
- Michael Calafati Condition Assessment of the Morgan House, Washington Township NJ.
- Veterans Memorial Tour Guide Speech. This document of 22 pages includes:
  - A brief History of the Letter Carrier's Uniform from the History of the US Postal Service, 1986.
  - History of the US Postal System from 1777-1993, from the USPS website.
  - History of First-Class Stamp Rates from the USPS website.
- History of the US Postal System 1773-1993 from the USPS website
  - Bunker Hill Presbyterian Church, Tour Guide Speech
  - Blackwood Railroad Station, Tour Guide Speech
- Old Stone House Village Tour Guide Speeches by Joan B. Michael
  - Map of prospective development of the OSHV, 2007
  - Olde Stone House, Tour Guide Speech
  - Olde Stone House, herbs listing with Latin and English names
  - Olde Stone House Smokehouse, Tour Guide Speech
  - Kitchen Herb Garden, Tour Guide Speech with list of herbs
  - Crees Quay Farmhouse, Tour Guide Speech

The materials shared with us as noted above were generally produced in the 1980s and contain little documentation from primary or secondary sources, which is so important to historians today. Except for the National Register Nomination of the Morgan House, the information used for interpretation needs to be updated with current scholarship to improve the accuracy of the information conveyed through brochures, docent tours, website/social media posts, interpretive signs, and special events. Further information on the properties will allow the WTHPC to understand the people who used them, built them, restored them, and saved them for posterity.

We are recommending that the four other moved buildings on site need further historic documentation from an Intensive Level Survey. As moved buildings, they are not likely to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places but might be eligible for the NJ Register of Historic Places. The Intensive Level Survey will review how and why historic buildings were moved as part of the analysis.<sup>8</sup> The Intensive Level Survey gathers a wide variety of historic documentation to create accurate and compelling information that can be translated into interesting stories about these places, so that docent volunteers can provide lively interpretation about each building to the public.

In an Intensive Level Survey, the historian looks at photographs of the interior and exterior of a building, analyzes its construction chronology, conducts a title search to document its social

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<sup>8</sup> Shelby Splain, "Guidelines for Architectural Surveys," New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, no date, accessed January 14, 2020, <https://www.nj.gov/dep/hpo/1identify/gaspart1.pdf>

history, conducts additional research in archives and newspapers using both primary and secondary sources. For these four buildings, it would be important to identify the original locations where the buildings were moved from, and if they were installed in the Quay Farm for an interim period before finding the final home at Olde Stone House Village.

All of this information is gathered to complete a set of the following forms for each building. The forms are available from the NJ Historic Preservation Office website.<sup>9</sup>

1. Base form: a 2-page form that shows location, name, summarizes significance, and includes one photo
2. Building form: a detailed discussion of the building's current and original appearance
3. Continuation sheet: used for photos, both current and historic
4. Eligibility worksheet: a discussion of the building's history, with a statement of significance and an assessment of the building's eligibility for listing in the State and National Registers

Gathering this information would be useful for the Post Office, Quay House, Church, and Railroad Station. The information collected from the Intensive Level Surveys should provide enough information to write high quality Interpretive Signs for the site as noted below. Learn more about Intensive Level Surveys from the NJ Historic Preservation Office.<sup>10</sup>

We discuss the need for an Interpretive and Furnishings Plan for the Morgan House in Chapter 3.

### **Explore Listing on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places**

We also recommend that additional research be undertaken by a qualified architectural historical to determine the potential for listing the four remaining buildings in the village for listing on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places. We understand that Historic Cold Spring Village in Cape May County was recently listed in the New Jersey Register as a grouping of moved historic buildings. While these are different situations, this would be a worthy research project, because listing would make these buildings eligible for New Jersey Historic Trust capital funding, of which they are currently not.

#### **b) Fund and install interpretive signage for all five buildings**

In our Current Conditions Memo (see Appendix A), we noted that there are two wooden signs on the property to identify the location as a historic site. Neither of these signs are meant to provide interpretation for a casual visitor who may stop to look at the buildings. There is one brown wooden sign for the Old Stone House Village located along Egg Harbor Road with the current OSHV logo. This tall sign is adjacent to the split rail fence along the Egg Harbor Road

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nj.gov/dep/hpo/1identify/gascontents.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nj.gov/dep/hpo/1identify/gascontents.pdf>, and <https://www.nj.gov/dep/hpo/1identify/gaspart1.pdf>

edge of the property. There is another painted wooden sign closer to the Morgan House which names the park, the James G. Atkinson Historical Site, dedicated October 2001.

We understand that the installation of interpretive signs is a long-term goal of the WTHPC. WTHPC Board member Dr. McCart has identified interpretive signage that she prefers at the Red Bank Battlefield in National Park, NJ. From a series of emails to Jen Jenofski PhD, the museum curator at the Whithall House of Red Bank Battlefield Park, we learned that Philadelphia's Metcalfe Design and Architecture were the designers who created the interpretive signs. Ms. Jenofski wrote the text and found the historic photos. Metcalfe designed the eight signs through a \$4,000 grant from the Gloucester County Cultural and Heritage Commission. The Park received a subsequent grant of \$13,000 with a \$7,000 county match from the New Jersey Historical Commission for fabrication of the graphics and metal signs by David Egner of Art Guild Inc. in West Deptford, NJ.<sup>11</sup> The Park's grounds crew installed the signs. Aaron Goldblatt is the contact at Metcalfe Design and Architecture. His email is [aarong@metdesignarch.com](mailto:aarong@metdesignarch.com), and the firm's website is [www.metdesignarch.com](http://www.metdesignarch.com). The Red Bank Battlefield interpretive signs pair contemporary and historic photographs with text to explain the history of particular buildings at the Red Bank Battlefield Park. The interpretive signs are framed in metal, and the interpretive panel is located about waist high or three feet off the ground. They are angled for optimal visitor viewing. These signs are typically three or four feet long. We recommend that each of the five historic buildings at OSHV have an interpretive sign. The architects will advise on placement of the signs.

To plan for the interpretive signs, we are recommending that additional documentary research called an Intensive Level Survey be undertaken about the four moved buildings. The National Register listing for the Morgan House supplies enough information for that building to create a high quality, informative, interpretive sign.

The historical materials that were provided to us are not adequate to create high quality, history-based text, and graphics for the interpretive signs for the four moved buildings. Perhaps there is other data that needs to be centralized for a historian to use to write these signs. Regardless, the four houses need better documentation, including title searches and access to wills and inventories collected from early owners, to provide the historic context for these buildings.

The Post Office, Railroad Station, Quay House and Church need additional research on their 19<sup>th</sup> century original use and 20<sup>th</sup> century adaptation as historic sites. This kind of research by a qualified historian is called an Intensive Level Survey. The historian's research includes a search of the land records for each owner of the buildings to understand the building's use, wills which may contain furniture and household goods inventories, historic image research, documented changes over time, and information about each building's time on the Quay Farm and eventual move to the OSHV site. Expect to pay in the range of \$10,000 to \$15,000 for this

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.artguildinc.com/just-out/>

type of research for all four buildings. This intensive level research will also be useful for docent training, so that the interpretation of the buildings and the people who lived there and used the buildings can emerge from this documentary evidence.

We suggest that the WTHPC combine the Intensive Level Survey of the four buildings with a request for five interpretive signs from a matching grant application to the Historic Site Management Grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust, or that the WTHPC seek funding from the New Jersey Historical Commission. Check the guidelines for both programs to determine which is better suited for your needs.

If the WTHPC wishes to start work on the interpretive sign project for the Morgan House, then a \$5000 Discover New Jersey License Plate Fund for Heritage Tourism from the New Jersey Historic Trust Heritage Tourism Program might be a good prospect to consider for funding. They take applications several times a year and there is no match required for these grants.

### **24/7/365 access to site information**

In addition to interpretive signage, there are many other ways to connect with visitors 365 days a year, even when the buildings are not open for tours.

### **Clio App**

A free interactive app called Clio ([theclio.com](http://theclio.com)) is popular with many historic sites around the county. A volunteer from a historic site associated with The Camden County (NJ) History Alliance uploaded the data for several of the history organizations to the Clio app. The content focused on the 2019 Camden County History Month.<sup>12</sup> They have organized their work as a history trail, which would also be a good choice for the OSHV. This app is completely free but would need to be promoted on the OSHV website, Facebook and Instagram pages, and Interpretive Signs when installed to encourage visitor traffic. This is a simple, easy, and free way to make information available to visitors who come when the site is not open to the public.

### **Cell phone tours**

Cell phone tours are another way to provide onsite 24/7/365 information about the five buildings at OSHV. Cell phone tours are not free and push the cost to both the visitor and the sponsoring organization. Depending on the cell phone tour plan, visitors may pay a fee to dial into the phone number and hear information about your site. Since many people today have all-inclusive phone plans, the cost may be a non-issue. The organization pays a monthly maintenance fee to the cell phone tour company to maintain their information. Often the maintenance plan pricing is based on the amount of calls made to the number, which the organization does not control. One of the better-known national cell phone tour companies is

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<sup>12</sup> <https://theclio.com/tour/959>.

Guide by Cell,<sup>13</sup> They do not list pricing on their website. This kind of product seems like overkill at this point in the OSHV's organizational development, given the small size of OSHV and the associated costs.

## **QR codes**

The interpretive signs may also benefit from having a QR code (Quick Response) on them, if the WTHPC wishes to have further 24/7/365 information for visitors. Consult the architect and fabricator of the interpretive signs, to determine if they are recommending installing QR codes on interpretive signs for similar client projects.

Check the Cumberland County Time Traveler Interpretive Program, which won a 2013 American Association for State and Local History National Award for its 15 signs around the county that showcase historic sites that are not regularly open to the public. Each of the 15 sites has a permanent sign which says Hear Here, with a QR code symbol, and a web site address. When the QR code is read by a smart phone, a podcast begins on the phone. If there is no smart phone or if the local Wi-Fi connection is bad, the person can access the web site to read about the building. Learn more at <http://www.co.cumberland.nj.us/news-display/?FeedID=4207> Matt Pisarski, Chief Planner with Cumberland County wrote the podcasts, a panel of historians vetted the text, Venturi Scott Brown & Associates were the sign designers. The county hired a firm to record the podcasts, and county public works installed them. Funded by a \$15,000 grant New Jersey Commission on the Humanities.

### **c) Create an OSHV website or expand current Friends of the OSHV website**

## **Role of websites in heritage tourism**

Websites are essential for any heritage destination. People planning trips look at the destination's website first to get basic information to determine if they want to make the effort to visit when there are so many options competing for their limited leisure time. Historic site website visitors look for the following information in advance of deciding to make a trip. Base line visitor information includes:

- Open hours—be specific and include dates and times. If you are open only second Saturday, give dates for the year on the website.
- Admission fees - note if your site is free and if donations are accepted
- Photos of the site, preferably with people in the photos.
- Maps of the site
- Address for GPS use
- Written directions to the site
- Contact information including email and phone number
- Upcoming programs with dates, times, and brief overview of each

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<sup>13</sup> <https://guidebycell.com/>

Currently, the WTHPC's landing page on the Township's website lacks this information for visitors who wish to visit the OSHV. We recommend that the above information be added to the WTHPC website and on a page titled Visitor Information. We also recommend this information be added to the "official" OSHV Facebook home page.

This basic information is essential and must appear on your website centralized under a visitor information heading. It must be available 24 hours a day in an easy to understand format that visitors can print out if needed. If this information is buried somewhere in the website and hard to find, visitors will not come or financially contribute to the organization.

Most heritage visitors interested in the rich history of the historic buildings at the Old Stone House Village will learn about this historic site via the internet. Today, they have to search through the current six Facebook pages for the "official" site or comb through the Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission's webpage on the Township website to plan their trip. Both lack basic information that visitors are looking for. We recommend adding the basic information above both the Township website, and the WTHPC page of the Township website.

### **Friends of the Old Stone House Village Website**

There are two websites associated with this historic property. One website is for the Friends of the Olde Stone House Village, and the other is associated with the Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission.<sup>14</sup>

A casual visitor planning to come to this historic site now would have to search for the basic information necessary to plan a visit as noted above. The Washington Township HPC landing page has only three navigational tabs. There are no navigation tabs addressed to visitors or to those who wish to learn more about the special events, to book a tour, or to attend a specific program.

### **Revised Friends of the OSHV website**

Since the Friends of the Old Stone House Village has a basic website format in place, we are making the following recommendations for additions to the current format, and edits to each tab on the FOSHV website. We believe these additional improvements will make the website even more helpful for visitors in the future, to transform the website into a repository about the history of the five buildings on the site, and to encourage more involvement by the public in the stories about and history of the site.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.friendsoftheoldstonehouse.org/>  
[https://www.twp.washington.nj.us/government/boards\\_commissions/historic\\_preservation\\_commission/index.php](https://www.twp.washington.nj.us/government/boards_commissions/historic_preservation_commission/index.php)

The current FOSHV website navigation is intuitive but could include more basic information for visitors. The current navigation tabs include Home, About, Join/Donate, Contact, and Events. We are suggesting some modest reorganizing and renaming of the navigation tabs to make it easier for visitors to find their way around the website to get what they need right away. We propose adding several new tabs: Visit, Press, History, Volunteer, and Programs. See our commentary about the information that each tab should contain below.

### **FOSHV Home Page**

The current FOSHV home page has a good general overview of the FOSHV and explains the Friends' role as a steward of this site. The navigation tabs at the top of the page provide good, consistent navigation through the site.

The current text for the organization's impact and mission is very well written. A handsome photo of the Morgan House is featured at the top of the page. It would be ideal if there was a slide show on this page with captions to showcase each building, visitors having fun at all the yearly events, and opportunities for visitors to become involved as volunteers. We suggest adding captions to each slide to help visitors understand the variety of programs offered.

The home page could highlight the next upcoming event, and a volunteer job description most in need of filling.

### **Additions to home page: Add a Donate Now Button**

We suggest the homepage be reorganized to include a brief paragraph about the stewardship role of the FOSHV and to invite website visitors to support your work through a Donate Now button on the homepage itself. Right now there is no Donate Now button anywhere on the website. Instead, there is a printable membership form in the Join/Donate page. Clicking this button brings up another page that the potential donor can use to print a form to send with a check. Nonprofit fundraising literature continues to note that 80% of donors still use checks to make their gifts to nonprofit organizations. However, donors must be given the option to make online gifts. The Donate Now button should appear in several places on the website, but its placement on the home page is the most important. See further information about Donate Now buttons included in the Join/Donate tab below.

### **About Tab**

This page should have basic visitor information about your heritage tourism destination. We know that the information may be redundant, but it needs to be repeated here and again in the Visit tab. The list of basic visitor information necessary to include was outlined above. Consider if the written directions cater to various points north, south, east, and west. Include the best email address to submit inquiries to and a link to the Contact Us page.

This page can also include a brief history of each property and an overview of the OSHV. The current paragraphs about the role of the FOSHV are a good start, and more information is needed.

The About tab should identify that the Morgan House property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. You can include a link the complete document here. Provide a brief explanation of the importance of being listed and a link to a PDF of the nomination form located under the History Tab (noted below).

The About tab should also include a link to the visitor services map prepared for this project showing the locations and addresses of other nearby visitor amenities. If you wish to include other historic sites open to the public on this list, do so, but please include a photo of the site and note the website or whom to call to learn when the property is open for visitors.

Finally, the About tab should also have a drop-down menu with the list of the FOSHV Board members including a photo of the entire Board or individual photos and a brief biography of each person. This page could also have links to PDF documents including your current bylaws and current IRS 990 forms (nonprofit tax return). It could also include a list of dates for Second Saturday openings with links to this again in the Projects tab where that project is more fully explained. Posting bylaws, budgets, strategic plans, and IRS 990 tax returns promotes organizational transparency for the public.

### **Join/Donate tab**

The Join/ Donate tab should go into further detail about the reasons why someone would contribute to the Friends of the Olde Stone House Historic Village. There should be two or three sentences about the work of the Friends with a call to action such as “Please help us maintain these precious buildings” and an obvious Donate Now button on this page too. This page is an opportunity to discuss your current and future plans for the site and to point out the importance of volunteering, whether as an individual, family, or community-based organization. Make sure there is a link to the current volunteer job descriptions posted on another page of the website.

A Donate Now button should appear several times on the website, and in social media. Logical places include on the home page and the Join/Donate page of the website. This button will link to a new FOSHV PayPal account or another nonprofit donation website such as Network for Good. The new PayPal/Network for Good page for FOSHV should offer a series of giving options such as \$25, \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500, \$1000, or \$2500 giving levels. Make sure there is also a “choose your own donation” donate button and a blank space for the donor to list the amount they wish to give.

### **IRS Gift Acknowledgements Requirements**

It is important to automate a thank you email for any gift coming from the Donate Now button, so that the donor immediately gets a message of thanks after the gift is made. The organization should follow up with a written thank you letter and acknowledgement of the gift within days.

The IRS requirements state that 501 c (3) organizations should acknowledge gifts made to them.

- 1) Donors are responsible for obtaining a written acknowledgment from a charity for any single contribution of \$250 or more before the donors can claim a charitable contribution on their federal income tax returns.
- 2) Charitable organizations are required to provide a written disclosure to a donor who receives goods or services in exchange for a single payment in excess of \$75.<sup>15</sup>

It is a nonprofit best practice to acknowledge every gift in writing, no matter the size. In addition, add your new donor to your email list to be sure you communicate with them regularly throughout the year.

### **New Tab: History**

We are suggesting that a History tab be created for the FOSHV website. The landing page should describe the variety of materials available, which can be navigated through a drop-down menu. We suggest the following sub-pages:

1. A timeline of the history of the site, and when each of the buildings was moved to the property
2. Links to a brief history page about each building: the Morgan House, Quay Farmhouse, Taylorville Post Office/Court House, Bunker Hill Presbyterian Church, and the Blackwood Railroad Station.
3. Links to PDFs of the brochure series (discussed below), the general visitor brochure, and a PDF version that the visitor can download. Make sure you tell the visitor that the brochure prints in color and is legal sized, so they use the correct printer settings.
4. National Register Nomination. This drop-down page should explain that the George (Jr.) and Sarah Morgan House nomination has an excellent description of the history and significance of this original building at this location. Explain a few of the important people associated with the building. Include a short paragraph identifying who might want to read this document. Students doing research projects about the property, genealogists, historians, and others interested in the growth of Washington Township would be interested in this material.
5. The Condition Assessment by Michael Calafati Architects, and any sub-consultant reports. A brief paragraph should describe why the Condition Assessment was created and how it was funded. Any subsequent reports by other consultants should also be uploaded.
6. Any reports from the restoration of the stained-glass windows of the Bunker Hill Presbyterian Church. Provide both historic and new photos with good labels of key buildings and historic features that would interest visitors.

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<sup>15</sup> IRS publicaiton 1771, accessed January 11, 2020, <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p1771.pdf>

7. Any new reports should be added to the website including the ones we are recommending, like the Intensive Level Surveys and the Furnishings and Interpretive Plans.

Further relevant information not already in another category might be included in this tab.

### **New Tab: Programs/Events**

This landing page should discuss the upcoming events, including both regular Second Saturday Tours (see below) and special events offered to the public. Drop down menus can direct website visitors to separate pages where each special event is described in detail. Remember to use high quality photos on your event pages or make photo albums of each event available on the website itself or through a photo sharing site like Flickr.

The Program/Events tab landing page should have a list of all the sub-pages in a drop-down menu explaining the various activities of the FOSHV, especially Second Saturday.

The Program/Events pages should explain the Second Saturday program fully and include photos of an interpreter interacting with a group, any fees for the program (or if it is free and if donations are accepted), and how to book a program via email or phone. You can also link each of these pages to your Contact Us page, which includes a form to fill out requesting further information.

### **New Tab: Volunteer**

This tab would list all the reasons why someone would want to spend time with other volunteers working at OSHV. This tab would have all the volunteer job descriptions that are being recruited for currently. Ideally, the most pressing job description would also be featured on the Home page, but all the different jobs needed throughout the year should have job descriptions listed here. If there is a particular job you need filled immediately, consider placing a note about it on the Home page with a link to this page where the full announcement would appear.

### **New Tab: Visit**

The FOSHV website Visit page should have the following information, even if it is redundant and already seen on other pages:

Base line visitor information

- Open hours—be specific and include dates and times. If you are open only second Saturday, give dates for the year on the website.
- Admission fees - note if your site is free and if donations are accepted
- Photos of the site, preferably with people in the photos.
- Maps of the site
- Address for GPS use

- Written directions to the site
- Contact information including email and phone number
- Upcoming programs with dates, times, and brief overviews.

We have learned in our research about historic sites over the last fifteen years that 45% of visitors do not always want a guided tour.<sup>16</sup> The breakdown between those that want a guided tour is often generational, with older visitors more interested in a guided tour, than younger people. It is essential to offer both guided and self-guided tours at historic sites today.

The self-guided visitor experience at Old Stone House Village can be undertaken with PDF versions of the brochure series that we are suggesting below. These brochures should be placed on this webpage as PDF documents with brief content description. Visitors should be encouraged to download the brochures that interest them before their visit so they can visit at their leisure when the grounds and buildings are available for touring as noted on a regularly updated homepage. The brochure series will include information about the exterior of the buildings and photos of the interiors so visitors can understand the interiors when they are not open for public view.

### **New Tab: Press**

This tab should be devoted to the articles and other press published about the OSHV and links to the various review websites like Yelp, Trip Advisor, and Google where reviews about the OSHV can be printed in their entirety in a drop-down menu or list. This might mean working with a newspaper publisher to link to their website so the reader can download the document. Offer a simple list of your press, organizing the articles by date with the article title, date, and newspaper as a link to the newspaper website or to a PDF of the article itself. This list will grow over time, and this page will become an excellent repository of all of your press coverage over the years. If you wish to repost the articles on the website, be sure that the FOSHV has the express permission from the publisher of each article to do so.

This page should also have high quality color digital images of the exterior and interior of each building with a brief caption that can be downloaded by the public and press. Call this the Photo Gallery. These color images should be at least 300 DPI and come with a photography credit from the FOSHV. These images should be taken by a professional photographer who will assign their rights to the FOSHV. Many of the photos posted to Facebook and Instagram pages could become part of the photo gallery.

### **Contact Us Tab**

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<sup>16</sup> ReachMuseum Advisors, [The Love/Hate Relationships with Guided Tours](http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum_audience_insight/2009/02/the-lovehate-relationships-with-guided-tours.html), February 11, 2009, [http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum\\_audience\\_insight/2009/02/the-lovehate-relationships-with-guided-tours.html](http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum_audience_insight/2009/02/the-lovehate-relationships-with-guided-tours.html)

The simple contact form is excellent as is. The drop-down message which includes directions using a Google Map is excellent but consider adding the street address and phone number to the map page. Visitors may find themselves on this page and need the exact street address to enter into their phone or GPS system for directions. The website needs to have a certain amount of redundancy because visitors may be using smart phones during their journey through the site and have little time to find information before you risk them deciding to go someplace else.

## Spanish translation

We checked the most recent census data for Gloucester County to get an idea of demographic changes. As the ten-year census will occur in 2020, the current data is estimated to 2018 on the Gloucester County website.<sup>17</sup>

While the county is now 78% white (non-Hispanic/Latino), there is reason to consider translating the FOSHV website into Spanish through Google Translate. While Google Translate is accurate, it can also be literal, so that not all words would be presented in Spanish.<sup>18</sup> You could offer a link to the Google Translate website and provide instructions. If you decide to go this route, offer a disclaimer about accuracy.

## Samples of Good Visitor Oriented Websites for Small Historic Sites

Below we list examples of websites from small historic sites in the area that we particularly admire. We note which sites are all volunteer operations.

- The Jacobus Vanderveer House, Bedminster, NJ – <https://jvanderveerhouse.org/> Part time staff
- Woodford Mansion, Philadelphia, PA – <https://woodfordmansion.org/> Part time staff
- Peter Mott House, Lawnside, NJ-- <http://petermotthouse.org/blog1/> All volunteer
- The Meadows Foundation, Franklin Township, NJ  
<http://www.themeadowsfoundation.org/> All volunteer
- Whitesbog Village, Browns Mills, NJ-- <http://www.whitesbog.org/> Full time staff
- Brinton 1704 House, West Chester, PA-- <http://www.brintonfamily.org/> Full time staff
- Barclay Farmstead Museum, Cherry Hill, NJ- <http://www.cherryhill-nj.com/Barclay>  
Part time staff.

### **d) Increase the number of days open per month with programming for the kitchen and herb garden**

We are recommending that the WTHPC begin planning an expansion of the number of weekend open days the site is available to the public. We are delighted that the Friends of the

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<sup>17</sup><https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/gloucestercountynewjersey/HSG651218#HSG651218>

<sup>18</sup> See an article about how to translate an entire website using Google Translate here  
<https://www.dummies.com/education/internet-basics/how-to-translate-a-website-with-google-translate/>

OSHV are willing to open the site seasonally once a month for Second Saturdays. It would be ideal to offer open weekends, when one Saturday and Sunday per month, the site would be open for visitors.

We believe that the kitchen garden holds many outstanding interpretive opportunities throughout the growing season. Historic sites with gardens offer visitors many reasons to visit and return throughout the year. If the WTHPC could work out an arrangement with the Certified Gardeners for a regular schedule of informal garden talks or opportunities for visitors to plant or harvest flowers, herbs, or vegetables, it would enhance any visit. Ideally, having a Certified Gardener on site for the Second Saturday or expanded Sunday open houses would be an excellent start for regular garden programming. We are unaware of the relationship between the OSHV and the Certified Gardeners who manage the greenspace but hope that the organization has a longstanding, high quality, mutually beneficial relationship.

The FOSHV could offer lectures or educational programming about the history of the Morgan House kitchen and herb garden with the support of the Certified Gardeners responsible for the garden. Gardeners can also offer general gardening lecture. Joan Berkey can lecture on the George Morgan Jr. House.

The WTHPC or the Friends of the OSHV could expand garden programming by adding an additional weekend day a month when a Certified Gardener would be available to talk about seasonal garden tasks such as selecting seeds, monitoring the garden for pests, historic seeds and plants used during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, using seeds and plants in open hearth cooking, drying herbs, or putting the garden to bed for the winter, among other topics. The Certified Gardeners could develop a yearly calendar with specific activities, lectures, or demonstrations as appropriate to be incorporated into the Second Saturday open houses or to expand the days open during the visitor season. Lectures and demonstrations could occur at the Bunker Hill Presbyterian Church for an indoor location in case of rain.

### **Expanding partnerships**

These gardening programs could be part of an expanded effort to partner with community organizations throughout the county for programming at the OSHV. There are many potential partners for gardening programs: horticulture programs offered by local community colleges, landscape architecture programs at colleges and universities, area Certified Gardener programs and the area agricultural extension programs of Rutgers University.<sup>19</sup> All of these partners could provide additional speakers for educational programs at OSHV, potential garden volunteers, or additional relationships that could prove useful for special event programming in the coming years. Forging these partnerships is dependent on a volunteer who wants to see this

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.gloucestercountynj.gov/depts/l/landpre/cgp/default.asp>. Also review <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/extension/>

type of programming expand and will form these relationships. There are many other potential partners with whom the FOSHV could partner for art show, concerts etc. at the site.

### **On site promotion of open days**

The new open dates on Second Saturday need to be aggressively promoted to ensure that visitors know the site is available. Particularly during the first year, there may be months when there are few visitors. This may frustrate docents who have trained for the opportunity to show visitors these interesting buildings. We recommend that the front doors be open when possible to attract the attention of passersby.

Continue to use the cloth blade sign that says Open Today to alert passing cars about programs and Second Saturday open house. Consider a banner to be hung from the Train Station roof printed with Start Your Tour Here.

If the Morgan House is staffed with a docent doing open hearth cooking, perhaps another temporary banner or blade sign can be placed near the James G. Atkinson sign saying Open Hearth Cooking Today. Work with the Township to determine if a blade or banner sign is permitted and obtain permits as needed.

### **Encouraging more partnerships**

The OSHV currently works with a variety of partners including the Friends of OSHV, Car Club, Paranormal Investigators, and the Gloucester County Certified Gardeners. Many of these relationships are long-standing. Working with partners has many benefits and is advantageous for both entities.

We recommend that the WTHPC consider further expanding these partnerships or entering into new ones to continue to grow events and historic programming in the coming years. The longstanding partnership with the Library could be expanded. The lectures and exhibits at the Library utilize the Library's mailing list, and thus exposes many more people to the work of the OSHV and Friends group. This is a great collaboration and could grow over time.

We understand that a fledgling Gloucester County history alliance has begun meeting quarterly and that representatives from OSHV have attended these meetings. We encourage you to continue to attend and offer to host their meeting at your site to familiarize others with the OSHV. Joint programming such as a county wide history week or month would be a great opportunity for all. Look to the Camden County History Alliance for help and assistance. <https://www.cchsnj.org/history-alliance>

We have already discussed the partnership with the Gloucester County Certified Gardens as a particular relationship that deserves to be expanded and embellished to offer additional programs about the historic kitchen and herb garden.

## **Partnerships with Academic Institutions**

Rowan University is a potential source for students helping setting up websites, helping with social media and conducting historic research on the additional buildings. Their History Department is a likely source of student interns as well as research projects for classes Their Master in History might be worth contacting [https://chss.rowan.edu/departments/history/MA\\_in\\_history/index.html](https://chss.rowan.edu/departments/history/MA_in_history/index.html) .

Rutgers Camden has the Mid Atlantic Center for the Humanities (MARCH) that is associated with the Graduate School's History Department. Dr. Charlene Miers chairs MARCH and would be a good resource for graduate school interns. Contact Dr. Mires at [cmires@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:cmires@camden.rutgers.edu). MARCH Professional Services provides professional historical consulting services at a reasonable cost to non-profit and community organizations across the Greater Philadelphia area. Our trained historians and professionals in allied fields are available for research projects, educational tours and programming, exhibition design, preservation projects, digital engagement, and more Learn more at . <https://march.rutgers.edu/march-professional-services/>.

## **Cross promotion with nearby historic sites**

We also recommend working with the county park system, especially other historic sites like Red Bank Battlefield, to cross promote the OSHV with their site(s). These partnerships can be extraordinarily helpful when both entities work on programming that is relevant to both sites, such as national anniversaries. For example, the 100th anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment giving women the right to vote will be celebrated in 2020 and is an opportunity to partner on programming.

Seeking partnerships with the eight Gloucester County historic sites already listed on the Visit South Jersey website might be an early and fruitful effort, since those listed want to be found by visitors.<sup>20</sup> The Glassboro train station is another nearby historic site that might be interested in partnership opportunities.

To cross promote, docents need to be knowledgeable about each historic site so they can encourage visitors to take in another site while they are out. Arrange guided tours for OSHV docents at each nearby historic site as part of a field trip to learn about each site. The cross promotion of other historic sites can be expanded gradually over time.

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<sup>20</sup>[https://visitsouthjersey.com/?post\\_type=member\\_org&member\\_org\\_categories=attractions&member\\_org\\_categories%5B%5D=historic-landmarks&member\\_org\\_categories%5B%5D=museums&features%5Bcounty%5D=Gloucester&features%5Bcity%5D=](https://visitsouthjersey.com/?post_type=member_org&member_org_categories=attractions&member_org_categories%5B%5D=historic-landmarks&member_org_categories%5B%5D=museums&features%5Bcounty%5D=Gloucester&features%5Bcity%5D=)

Cross promoting includes offering brochures and event listings from each site at your site. Informal networking with other historic site administrators is the first step in any cross promotion. We encourage OSHV to reach out to your historic site peers to get to know them and ask for their assistance to cross promote your sites. This is an excellent volunteer project.

#### e) Expand Social Media Promotion

##### Promoting OSHV to visitors

Social media is a very inexpensive way to promote historic sites, but it is not the only way to reach visitors that might be interested in events or taking a tour. Both traditional and new media is necessary to promote historic sites and market them for visitors. We are suggesting the following social media channels first because they are free or inexpensive publicity tools.

##### VisitSouthJersey.com--South Jersey's visitor website

The Visit South Jersey website is the official Destination Marketing Organization for Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Salem counties and the Outer Coast Plain Wine Region in South Jersey. Listings on the website are free. Events can be uploaded by anyone online through their Submit an Event portal.<sup>21</sup> The VisitSouthJersey website has one photograph of the George Morgan House and a brief history of the Village.<sup>22</sup>

There is an error in this listing indicating that the site is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 5pm. **This needs to be corrected.** There is a contact form on the website where you can submit events and to make corrections.<sup>23</sup> Corrections can also be made by calling their headquarters at (856) 757-9400. We suggest calling to correct this error and connecting with this important resource for visitors.

##### VisitNJ.com-- the State of NJ Tourism Website

The state's official tourism website is VisitNJ.com. Our research indicated that there is currently no listing for Old Stone House Village on the state's tourism website. This is an opportunity for the WTHPC, as all listings are free. There is a link to submit information.<sup>24</sup> A tourism business listing must be submitted by email to Arion.Jamerson@sos.NJ.gov.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://visitsouthjersey.com/submit-an-event/>.

<sup>22</sup> <https://visitsouthjersey.com/member-org/old-stone-house-village/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://visitsouthjersey.com/contact-us/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.visitnj.org/how-to-get-tourism-business-listed>

The WTHPC events and Second Saturdays at the OSHV can also be listed on this statewide tourism website. The state is specific about events they want to promote, so please follow their advice.<sup>25</sup> Events must be submitted in advance and are listed within a week if approved.

### **Gloucester County NJ Tourism**

Gloucester County has a list of historic sites on their website, but the vast majority of listed sites are privately owned.<sup>26</sup> It is simply a list. There is no map. Each listing includes a one or two sentence explanation, some have photos, and a few have links to another page with a photo and slightly more information. This is not particularly helpful for visitors interested in sites that are open for special events or open regularly throughout the year. The Quay Farmhouse original location is listed here, but the George Morgan Jr. House is listed as Starlight Stables (private) which indicates that the listing is very, very old and needs to be corrected. None of other historic buildings on the OSHV site appear on this list, which is frustrating.

### **Yelp and Trip Advisor Reviews**

Yelp and Trip Advisor are two websites where visitors can leave public reviews for various types of businesses. These two pages have become important for visitors seeking user generated content about historic sites. Both Yelp and Trip Advisor reviews cannot be managed by the site owner and are thus viewed as honest feedback by visitors. Site owners must be active in monitoring postings on these two websites.

Negative reviews should be responded to as soon as possible, preferably the same day. Best practices for dealing with negative reviews are to acknowledge the negative review, apologize for not meeting the visitor's expectations even if they seem unreasonable, impossible, or odd, and vow to be better at customer service. Since negative reviews cannot be removed, the owner must encourage positive reviews to overcome any negative or neutral reviews.<sup>27</sup>

There are no Trip Advisor pages for the Old Stone House Village in Washington Township or Sewell, New Jersey. There are other Old Stone House listings on Trip Advisor, but not for the Washington Township's historic site.<sup>28</sup>

The Yelp page for the OSHV remains unclaimed. If this page could be claimed by someone affiliated with the WTHPC, perhaps the Friends of the OSHV would encourage reviews of the village and it could be used to drive online visitor traffic to the site. Yelp, like Trip Advisor, must be regularly monitored to assure that any negative review is acknowledged promptly

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.visitnj.org/how-to-add-tourism-event>.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.gloucestercountynj.gov/about/historical/default.asp>.

<sup>27</sup> This article about visitor attractions and managing reviews on Trip Advisor is helpful:  
<https://www.tripadvisor.com/TripAdvisorInsights/w805>.  
<https://www.yelp.com/biz/washington-township-old-stone-house-village-blackwood?osq=olde+stone+house+village>

using current best practices.<sup>29</sup>

## **Google reviews**

On the left-hand side of a Google search for the Old Stone House Village in Sewell, NJ there is a photo and reviews of the Olde Stone House Village. There are 17 reviews, all of which are positive. The website button leads to the Friends of the Old Stone House Village website, not the Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission.<sup>30</sup>

## **Instagram**

The OSHV Instagram page holds much potential. The OSHV Instagram page offers many additional possibilities to post content and event information.<sup>31</sup> In the last two years, young people have migrated away from Facebook and now use Instagram to post photos and videos about their lives. Many historic sites use Instagram extensively to post stunning visitor photos of the site, and to promote videos from events.

We recommend that all Facebook posting be reported to Instagram simultaneously. The Instagram platform you have already will bring a different audience to the site, especially since its focused-on photos and videos. The professional photos taken at events can be uploaded to Instagram in groups of ten for each posting, and captions can be made for all or some of the photos. You can encourage your fans to tag themselves in the photos, exposing the tagged person's social media network to the OSHV.

## **Google Listing for OSHV**

It is a best practice to understand what visitors see when they search for your organization on Google. Does your webpage or Facebook page rank near the top of the search results? If these key information sources are buried towards the end of the page or worse, on the second page, your visitors will be frustrated they cannot find you and move quickly to find another site to visit.

We used Google in late December 2019 to identify the top ten results when searching for Olde Stone House Village in Washington Township, NJ. We used the official spelling and word order for the organization, but not every visitor will do that. You can count on visitors looking for Old, Stone Village, Morgan House, or other variations than the site's proper name, Olde Stone House Historic Village.

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<sup>29</sup> Refer to advice from Yelp about dealing with reviews at <https://blog.yelp.com/2019/07/dos-donts-responding-to-reviews-yelp>.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.friendsoftheoldstonehouse.org>.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/explore/locations/409124567/olde-stone-house-historic-village-washington-twp-gloucester-co-nj/>

## What a Visitor Finds about OSHV on the Internet

Below are the top ten webpages in order of listing that appear on the first page of the Google search for Olde Stone House Historic Village, Washington Township, NJ. Our Google search was conducted on December 22, 2019. We advise frequently reviewing the Google listings for the OSHV to understand what a visitor would see when searching for your historic site. We have included Washington Township in this search to eliminate visitor attractions with a similar name in a different state.

We conducted the search right before the Christmas holidays, but none of these websites were promoting the site's holiday events.

1. <https://visitsouthjersey.com/member-org/old-stone-house-village/>
  - a. When we searched this listing in late December, Visit South Jersey was still promoting the Halloween Haunting held by Paranormal Investigations in late October.
2. [http://njrope.com/Olde\\_Stone\\_House\\_Village.html](http://njrope.com/Olde_Stone_House_Village.html)
  - a. The Olde Stone House Village is promoted on this webpage managed by the New Jersey Researchers of Paranormal Evidence (NJROPE).
3. <https://www.facebook.com/oldestonehousehistoricvillage/?rf=284049654946128>
  - a. This is the official Facebook page for OSHV with more than 2,300 fans. Note this comes up as the third listing in a Google search rather than the first.
4. <https://www.twp.washington.nj.us/336/Olde-Stone-House-Village>
  - a. This is a Township website that reads "404 The requested URL/web page was not found on this web site." This page should be removed as soon as possible because it is confusing to visitors. Please note that the more complete Washington Township webpage does not come up on either the first or second page of a Google search.
5. [https://www.twp.washington.nj.us/departments/parks\\_recreation/parks\\_and\\_facilities/olde\\_stone\\_house\\_village.php](https://www.twp.washington.nj.us/departments/parks_recreation/parks_and_facilities/olde_stone_house_village.php)
  - a. This is the only page on the Township website with specific information about the Olde Stone House Historic Village. This page states that the site is open Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm. This should be corrected, as it implies that the buildings are open to visitors all day during the week. We recommend adding the basic visitor information to this page and the WTHPC webpage as well. Note that the WTHPC webpage did not come up on the first or second pages of our Google search.

6. <https://thesunpapers.com/2017/10/09/tales-of-the-unknown-leave-the-olde-stone-house-village-a-halloween-destination/>
  - a. The sixth listing is a Sun Newspaper article promoting the October 2019 Paranormal Investigations.
7. [https://www.nj.com/gloucester-county/2015/10/ghost\\_hunters\\_go\\_on\\_a\\_mission\\_at\\_old\\_stone\\_village.html](https://www.nj.com/gloucester-county/2015/10/ghost_hunters_go_on_a_mission_at_old_stone_village.html)
  - a. The seventh listing is another news article about the Paranormal Investigations event in October 2019 from the nj.com website.
8. [https://www.nj.com/indulge/2014/02/paranormal\\_corner\\_who\\_may\\_haunt\\_the\\_olde\\_stone\\_house\\_village\\_in\\_washington\\_township.html](https://www.nj.com/indulge/2014/02/paranormal_corner_who_may_haunt_the_olde_stone_house_village_in_washington_township.html)
  - a. This listing is a third article about the October 2019 Paranormal Investigations event from nj.com.
9. <https://hulafrog.com/deptford-monroe-township-nj/olde-stone-house-historic-village>
  - a. This is a website for school age children focused on visitor attractions for kids.
10. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:OLDE\\_STONE\\_VILLAGE\\_WASHINGTON\\_TOWNSHIP\\_HISTORIC\\_PRESERVATION,\\_GLOUCESTER\\_COUNTY.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:OLDE_STONE_VILLAGE_WASHINGTON_TOWNSHIP_HISTORIC_PRESERVATION,_GLOUCESTER_COUNTY.jpg)
  - a. Finally, the tenth listing is the Wikipedia page for the Olde Stone House Village. This page should be reviewed revised. Most notably, it should include a mention of and a link to the National Register Listing for the Morgan House.

Again, we encourage a volunteer to conduct a Google search at least once a month to see what your visitors will see if they search for your site. This is an important volunteer project and we hope someone can be recruited to take it on.

**f) Plan and install permanent handicapped accessible restrooms**

Currently, there are no permanent, handicapped accessible public restrooms at Olde Stone House Historic Village. The WTHPC rents porta-pottys for various public events. We understand that there is an interest in creating a permanent public restroom adjacent to the Bunker Hill Presbyterian Church. Having a permanent, accessible restroom on site would permit the site to generate higher fees from site rentals and provide the most basic of all visitor amenities for the public.

We understand that installing a new, permanent restroom building would require permission to extend the sewer and water lines from the residential subdivision. The Township would need to obtain permission from the subdivision and hookups.

Installing permanent, accessible restroom facilities should be considered essential in the overall development of Old Stone House Village as a visitor attraction, because public restrooms are expected by visitors and volunteers working at a historic site. An architect will be needed to identify the most logical location for the handicapped accessible restroom building and to provide advice about how to connect to nearby water and sewer lines. The architect can also oversee construction and provide advice about cleaning and staffing the restrooms once completed. The ground disturbance for construction of a new handicapped accessible restroom would likely require the services of an archaeologist on the team. Ground disturbance provides a great opportunity for public archaeology dig days as an educational activity that should be built into any grant request.

Until permanent restrooms are installed, the WTHPC can continue to use portable restroom facilities for rentals, special events, and Second Saturday open houses. Porta-pottys are not usable for visitors during the cold weather months due to freezing, so they are a temporary and unattractive solution for visitor needs. Being a gracious host to visitors means providing appropriate restroom facilities.

While temporary porta-potty facilities are not ideal, there are upgrades available for larger events when portable restrooms trailers can be trucked in to provide a better-quality restroom experience. NJ companies providing restroom trailers include Johnny on the Spot, New Jersey Restrooms and Cherry Hill Portable Restrooms.<sup>32</sup>

The WTHPC should plan with Township officials how accessible restrooms will be staffed and cleaned once installed. The new restrooms need to be spotlessly clean and well stocked for visitors at all times. Anything less shows visitors that the site managers do not care about visitor experience. The WTHPC could be responsible for locking the restroom facilities unless the site is open for a rental, special event, or Second Saturday open house.

The costs for planning and creating the accessible restroom facility could be paid through a matching grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust Historic Site Management Grant. We believe that this site improvement should be a top short-term priority over the next three years.

In the next chapter, we discuss long term projects designed for three to five years in the future.

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<sup>32</sup><http://www.johnnyonthespot.com/>, <http://www.newjerseyrestrooms.com/>  
<http://portabletoiletsandshowers.homestead.com/portapotty-restroomtrailers-cherryhill-nj.html>

## Chapter 3 Long Term Projects

This chapter discusses the following projects, which we recommend be planned for the next three to five years.

- a) Provide more documentary information about the Morgan House through an Interpretive Plan and Furnishings Plan
- b) Create a brochure series on each building on the site
- c) Make parking lot improvements including paving, handicapped parking spaces, and lighting improvements
- d) Review current docent training once additional documentary information is in hand
- e) Consider creating a five-year strategic plan for the further growth and development of OSHV, including future staffing options.

### **a) Provide more documentary information about the Morgan House through an Interpretive Plan and Furnishing Plan**

The National Register Nomination of the Morgan House completed by Joan Berkey is a great start towards having high quality historic documentation about the history of the Morgan House and the people who lived at the site. The information contained in the National Register Nomination is most likely enough to create the interpretive signs mentioned above.

The Morgan House is the showpiece of the larger historic site. We are uncertain if presenting the Morgan House as a traditional historic house museum is the main aim of the WTHPC, but if so, then we recommend making the effort to create an Interpretive Plan and Furnishings Plan for the Morgan House over the next five years. These documents will help the WTHPC if they want to faithfully recreate an historic house museum interior with period appropriate furniture and household goods that were used by residents at a particular period in time.

The information from Consilia Kaisar in *Ye Old Stone House, Township of Washington, Gloucester County, C. 1730 A Brief History*, published in 1986, does not contain any footnotes or other primary source documentation such as wills or inventories that describe the furniture and household goods of people who once lived at this property. Modern scholarship requires access to documentary evidence to create a quality interpretive program.

We are recommending that the showpiece of OSHV, the Morgan House, be the subject of an Interpretive and Furnishings Plan above and beyond the National Register Nomination already

completed.

An interpretive plan is a management document that outlines and guides decisions about a site's interpretive programming. An interpretive plan includes:

- Significance statements describing the national, state, and/or local significance of the property
- Interpretive themes that identify and organize the site's most important stories
- An audience analysis identifying existing and targeted audiences and specific needs associated with each group
- Visitor experience objectives outlining the ways various audiences may connect with the stories and resources of the site.<sup>33</sup>

The purpose of the Interpretive Plan, completed by a qualified historian and the client, is to place the Morgan House in its historic context, to gather further historic documentation from primary and secondary sources about early owners, and to identify and place in the building historically accurate furnishings and household objects, either reproductions or originals, based on wills and historic household inventories of past owners. This information, along with the National Register nomination, will help identify accurate and compelling stories for docents to use to interpret the Morgan House. These documents are common research projects for traditional historic house museums. The National Park Service offers a guide to Comprehensive Interpretive Planning.<sup>34</sup>

Immediately after the completion of an Interpretive Plan, we recommend that a Furnishing Plan be created for the Morgan House. It is ideal that both documents be created by the same historian as part of a single project.

According to the National Park Service, "a historic furnishings report (HFR) provides a history of a structure's use and documents the type and placement of furnishings to a period of interpretive significance. The HFR provides guidance for the care and maintenance of furnishings that are exhibited in the structure, including specific instructions for the care of newly acquired objects."<sup>35</sup> Therefore, an HFR is more than just a list of objects and their placement. It is a source of important interpretive material, documentation of important

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<sup>33</sup> National Park Service, Interpretive Planning Tools for Heritage Area, Historic Trails and Gateways, no date, accessed January 13, 2020, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/upload/Interp-Planning-Toolkit-for-Heritage-Areas-Historic-Trails-and-Gateways-2.pdf>

Linda Norbut Suits, "Here I Have Lived: The Preparation and Implementation of a Historic Furnishing Report," 2000, accessed January 14, 2020, [https://www.okmuseums.org/sites/oma2/uploads/documents/Technical\\_Bulletins/Technical\\_Bulletin\\_40\\_-\\_Here\\_I\\_Have\\_Lived.pdf](https://www.okmuseums.org/sites/oma2/uploads/documents/Technical_Bulletins/Technical_Bulletin_40_-_Here_I_Have_Lived.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> [nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/upload/Interp-Planning-Toolkit-for-Heritage-Areas-Historic-Trails-and-Gateways-2.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/upload/Interp-Planning-Toolkit-for-Heritage-Areas-Historic-Trails-and-Gateways-2.pdf).

<sup>35</sup> National Park Service, Cultural Resource Management Guideline, Release 5 (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 1997), 144

decisions, preservation tool, and, most importantly, a guide to accurate restoration. It will become an essential institutional resource and planning document.<sup>36</sup>

A good short explanation of a historic furnishings report can be found on the Oklahoma Museums website.<sup>37</sup> A table of contents of a sample combined Interpretive Plan and Furnishings Plans is attached as Appendix D.

Expect to pay about \$15,000 or more for a combined Interpretive Plan and Furnishings Plan, which would be created together by a qualified historian. Funding for these documents could be supported from matching funds from the New Jersey Committee for Humanities or the New Jersey Historical Commission. Check the guidelines for these two funders and speak with staff to determine how to make an applicaiton.

### **Consider undertaking a Conservation Assessment for Preservation grant**

Once the ownership matter is resolved, the federal Institute of Library and Museum Services offers a yearly matching grant program called Collections Assessment for Preservaiton Program (CAP). “ The CAP program is for small and medium sized museums that want to study the museum’s collections, buildings, and building systems, and its policies and procedures, related to collections care. “<sup>38</sup>The CAP results in a report with prioritized recommendations for improvements to collections care. Learn more about CAP from <https://www.culturalheritage.org/resources/collections-care/cap/process>

#### **b. Create a brochure series**

As the general visitor brochure is printed and rolled out in 2020, consider if you wish to create separate brochures for each of the properties. We believe that it would be worth the investment of time and money. It would be ideal for any additional brochure, rack card, or insert to be branded with the same logo, paper size, ink and paper colors, paper, and printing quality. Consider printing a FOSHV membership brochure as part of this effort. Again, it would be best if all the printed materials had the same look and feel by being branded with the other collateral.

#### **Suggested brochures for the series include:**

- A. General visitor brochure (being designed now)
- B. Event/Second Saturday Insert or rack card
- C. Morgan House

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<sup>37</sup>[www.okmuseums.org/sites/oma2/uploads/documents/Technical\\_Bulletins/Technical\\_Bulletin\\_40 - Here I Have Lived.pdf](http://www.okmuseums.org/sites/oma2/uploads/documents/Technical_Bulletins/Technical_Bulletin_40_-_Here_I_Have_Lived.pdf)

<sup>38</sup><https://www.culturalheritage.org/resources/collections-care/cap/process>

- D. Quay Farmhouse and collections
- E. Turnersville Post Office and Court House
- F. Bunker Hill Presbyterian Church
- G. Blackwood Railroad Station
- H. Kitchen and herb garden at the Morgan House
- I. Membership brochure for the Friends of Old Stone House Historic Village

### **Brochure design and content**

All of the brochures mentioned here should be designed in a consistent format, ideally to match the General Visitor Brochure. The brochure size can be either letter or legal-size format. Fold all brochures into a standard format for use in a rack card rack, sized for a number 10 envelope. The brochures should be designed in color so they can be printed on a laser printer, or by Vista Print or other low-cost printer. You may wish to pay to print the brochures on thick glossy paper, but that might be cost prohibitive and is not required. Glossy paper of a medium weight would work well.

Create a consistent design for all brochures as a series. Distinguish one brochure from another by color, number, or other visual device at the top of the brochure. The text size font should be 12 point. Include captions for any photos in 10-point font. If there are floor plans or site plans, make sure the legends are at least 10 point so visitors can read them. Include at least three to five photos in each brochure and make them large enough to illustrate the point you want to make. Use captions for each photo, including the source of the photo if it is not the Friends OSHV archives along the edge of the photo in smaller, 10-point font type.

Add brochures with new content as suggested above. Most, if not all, of the materials needed to write the Morgan House brochure are included in the National Register nomination. The Intensive Level Survey will provide the information needed to create the other four brochures. It would be ideal if all the brochures were written by one person, so the “voice” was consistent. Regardless, have an editor review the text of the entire set of brochures to make them consistent in approach and tone and to remove any redundancy between brochures. Use footnotes or references to document all the historical information in the brochures. Include a date on the back of each brochure to indicate when it was written or updated. Make sure that each brochure has consistent contact information and references to the website, CLIO app, or QR Code. Upload these brochures to your website as PDF documents and encourage visitors to download them before their visit.

### **Brochure racks and locations**

A brochure rack will be needed, either hanging on a wall or freestanding on a tabletop. They can be made of clear plastic or wire and are inexpensive to purchase. Displays to Go has an extensive selection of both plastic and wire rack card racks. Buy racks once for all the brochures

you plan for the series.<sup>39</sup>

These racks need to be regularly filled with all the brochures in the series. We suggest the following locations for the brochure racks: in the Blackwood Railroad Station if it remains the start of any docent tour, Bunker Hill Presbyterian Church, and the Morgan House. Perhaps single brochure racks should be available in the other historic buildings onsite to contain their brochure in this series.

The rack needs to be checked at least weekly to make sure it is full. Consider a weatherproof outdoor rack as a future project. While a covered, outdoor brochure rack for all the brochures would be ideal so that casual visitors would have access to the brochures for self-guided purposes, vandalism, design, and location may be concerns.

**c. Parking lot improvements: paving, handicapped parking spaces, and lighting improvements**

The current parking lot is made of gravel and grass and seems large enough for the majority of events. WTHPC members understand how to apportion parking availability for various special events, including the spring classic car show. We see no need to pave the parking lot or make any additional changes to the lot now. Installation of permanent restrooms will permit the Township to significantly expand the rental of that facility for weddings and other events, and handicapped parking spaces will be needed then.

The WTHPC may want to consider upgrading the parking lot to a paved surface with pedestrian lighting in the future if there is considerable growth in evening weddings or events at the site. The growth in rentals is wholly dependent on the existence of a permanent restroom building adjacent to the Bunker Hill Church building. The paved parking lot will need at least two dedicated handicapped parking spaces nearest to the Bunker Hill Presbyterian Church. In the future when the permanent restroom facilities are installed near the Bunker Hill Church, it would be a good time to consider adding lighting for the handicapped parking spaces.

As mentioned in the Current Conditions Memo, planning for restrooms may take time due to gaining permissions to connect to water and sewer lines and other design and permitting concerns.

**d. Review current docent training once additional documentary information is in hand**

We understand that docents who interpret the OSHV are given the scripts as room books for their training for interactions with visitors. These scripts were shared with us as mentioned earlier in this report.

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<sup>39</sup> [www.displays2go.com/C-7/Leaflet-Holders-Tiered-Literature-Racks-with-Steps](http://www.displays2go.com/C-7/Leaflet-Holders-Tiered-Literature-Racks-with-Steps).

We believe the materials and approach to gathering information and training docent interpreters at OSHV needs to be upgraded. New historic research about the buildings and the people who owned and used them will help docents offer more engaging tours.

We also suggest a more collaborative approach be taken with docent interpreters so they can learn the material and produce their own tour content without relying on someone else's written script. Allowing docents to create their own tours with accurate information geared to their own particular interests will make it much easier to retain these docent interpreters over time, and visitors will encounter more enthusiastic ambassadors for the site.

## **Update Docent Training**

Providing regular tours of historic sites is an important way to build an audience. By offering regular tours rather than permitting appointment-only visits, you will be able to reach more people and offer a valued service for those interested in Washington Township history.

We recommend that the OSHV continue to develop its volunteer tour guide training program so there is a group of trained and skilled people who can offer engaging tours on a regular basis at the historic site.

Expanding the existing docent program will require inspired leadership. One person needs to be the leader of the effort, preferably someone trained as a teacher of adults. They would need to create the tour program and a curriculum. We recommend using *Great Tours! Thematic Tours and Guide Training for Historic Sites* as a starting point for developing a curriculum and training process for OSHV.<sup>40</sup> This book is considered a classic in the field and is easy to use because it has worksheets and other training materials that can be easily reproduced for training purposes.

## **Types of Docent Tours**

We recommend training docents for two specific kinds of jobs: as a tour guide for occasional or monthly public tours (see below for more on regularly scheduled tours) and as a "guide on demand" to be stationed in one location in the Village during larger events to provide brief interpretative remarks about that space if approached by a visitor during a large event when tours might be too difficult to manage.

Regular tours held on the first Saturday of the month would be the primary work of the docent corps. A docent would be scheduled for that time period, whether there are visitors or not. The regular schedule for tours should be publicized on the websites of the WTHPC and FOSHV, on

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<sup>40</sup> Barbara Abramoff Levy, Sandra Mackenzie Lloyd and Susan Porter Schreiber. *Great Tours! Thematic Tours and Guide Training for Historic Sites*, Nashville TN: American Association for State and Local History, 2002.

the official Facebook page, and in a press, release sent each month to local media.

This docent corps can also be used as a “guide on demand” as mentioned above. The purpose of a guide on demand is to provide information to a visitor when they approach the guide for further information. The docent does not offer remarks or a “canned” recitation unless asked by a visitor, thus offering the visitor a self-guided experience if they desire.

### **Both Guided AND Self-guided Tours Needed**

An important 2009 article based on national research of audiences who visit historic sites noted that 55% of visitors to historic sites dislike guided tours. These visitors prefer to visit “on their own” and at their own pace.<sup>41</sup> A guide on demand provides visitors with additional information beyond a written brochure and adds to their enjoyment while still permitting them to visit at their own pace as a self-guided experience—because providing only one or the other will alienate half of your visitors based on this research.<sup>42</sup>

If The Washington Township HPC wants to maximize the heritage tourism potential of this site, there must be a mix of both guided and self-guided interpretive opportunities for visitors.

There is a wide range of self-guided tour options including exhibits, movies and video clips, interactive stations, brochures, interpretive signs, cell phone tours, audio guides, stationary guides (“guides on demand”), podcasts, and cell phone apps like CLIO.com. New ways to interpret historic sites are being developed every day.

Those that enjoy guided tours also enjoy demonstrations by people in street clothes or by costumed reenactors, hands on activities, theater performances, or role play.<sup>43</sup>

Planning a mix of activities throughout the year when the site is open and offering both guided and self-guided activities will maximize visitor engagement at OSHV.

#### **e. Update the existing five-year strategic plan for the further growth and development of OSHV, including future staffing options.**

Our final recommendation is to consider updating the current five-year strategic plan to help the WTHPC consider its future direction, build its organizational capacity, and assure that the volunteers and WTHPC leadership are headed in the same direction. The projects noted in this

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<sup>41</sup> Reach Museum Advisors, [The Love/Hate Relationships with Guided Tours](http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum_audience_insight/2009/02/the-lovehate-relationships-with-guided-tours.html), February 11, 2009. [http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum\\_audience\\_insight/2009/02/the-lovehate-relationships-with-guided-tours.html](http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum_audience_insight/2009/02/the-lovehate-relationships-with-guided-tours.html).

<sup>42</sup> Reach Museum Advisors, [Interpretation Preferences: How 40,000 museum-goers prefer to experience museums](http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum_audience_insight/2010/05/interpretation-preferences-how-), May 19, 2010. [http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum\\_audience\\_insight/2010/05/interpretation-preferences-how-](http://reachadvisors.typepad.com/museum_audience_insight/2010/05/interpretation-preferences-how-)

report need to be prioritized by the WTHPC so that matching grants and other funding can be secured in a logical sequence to build on your successes and enhance the future interpretation of the site.

The Strategic Plan update we are recommending is for the future, five years from now, after the majority of the projects noted in this report are implemented. This new Strategic Plan would help the WTHPC chart its course after addressing many of the projects listed in this report.

### **What is a Strategic Plan?**

Board Source™, a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to advance the public good by building exceptional nonprofit boards and inspiring board service, defines a Strategic Plan as a written document that defines an organization's overarching strategies and major areas of work to be completed over a five year period in order to achieve the organization's mission. Strategic Plans for historic sites are created through a process that builds on research to accumulate wisdom about the historic site, its environment, and its educational and fundraising potential. This process involves both WTHPC Board members and outside stakeholders to ensure that the resulting Strategic Plan contains a comprehensive understanding of the historic site's current state and preferred future.

The Strategic Plan research is conducted over four to six months, guided by a consultant, and often includes the following five activities:

1. **Stakeholder Survey.** A survey of stakeholders to understand the needs and preferences of visitors when they visit the site. A hard copy of the survey should be handed out to visitors, and an electronic copy posted on Facebook. It would be ideal if the survey could be sent to the Township's mailing list or other partner mailing lists to get a broad cross section of users as well as non-users of the site. It is ideal if the survey responses exceed 365, making it a statistically valid survey representative of the entire population of the Township. This survey should have both closed and open-ended questions where respondents could add their own comments. A consultant prepares a survey report which analyzes the survey data to identify key issues for the WTHPC Board to address now and as part of the future to be shaped by the Strategic Plan. The report should have a four-page executive summary to be used later in the research phase with committees formed for the rest of the research.
2. **A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis Workshop.** A three-hour evening meeting with about 30-40 key stakeholders including all WTHPC Board members, key volunteers and docents, partner organizations including certified gardeners, elected officials, and other partners the site wants to involve in the future. During the meeting, the consultant leads the group through a discussion of the current conditions of both the historic site and the organization responsible for its management. The consultant then prepares a summary memo offering

observations and recommendations for solving several specific short and medium-term problems. The summary memo is circulated to all attendees of the final meeting, the Visioning and Goal Setting Workshop.

3. A Visioning and Goal Setting Workshop. A three-hour-long evening meeting that invites the same people as the SWOT to help identify key future projects, the funding to implement them, and staff to complete the work. Prior to the workshop, all participants receive copies of the executive summary of the survey report and the SWOT Analysis Workshop memo. The consultant guides discussion about future projects, plans, and aspirations for the historic site over the next five years.
4. Write the Strategic Plan. The consultant prepares a draft and final version of the strategic plan which includes a budget page that identifies potential operating and capital budgets over five years. The WTHPC reviews the first draft, makes any changes, and then votes to approve and adopt the strategic plan at a second meeting. Typically the strategic plan is published as a PDF document and circulated to strategic plan participants, likely funders, and Township elected officials. The Strategic Plan is promoted on the website and through traditional and social media.

### **Funding for a Strategic Plan**

The New Jersey Cultural Trust/New Jersey Historical Commission offers grants for Strategic Plans. Refer to their guidelines.<sup>44</sup> The applicant would have to be the Friends of OSHV, as this funder will not support government entities and must be first **qualified** by the NJCT. Apply for Institutional/Financial Stabilization Projects to build organizational capacity and create your strategic plan. These awards are between \$10,000 and \$50,000. A Strategic Plan should cost between \$10,000 and \$20,000. There is no match required. Applicant submits a Notice of Intent to apply in Mid-January 2021, and you must speak with a NJCT representative in February/March of 2021. Then, you are invited to submit an application by April 2, 2021. Awards are announced in fall of 2021. These grants are highly competitive. It would be wise to talk to the program officer at the NJCT for advice before considering a Letter of Intent.

The dates for applications change yearly, so check with the New Jersey Historical Commission's grant page should you decide to apply. For example, the 2020 grant round begins with a letter of intent due on January 22, 2020. The grant maximum is \$25,000 for this round.<sup>45</sup>

Other sources of funding for Strategic Plans might include the County Cultural and Heritage Commission, or perhaps a community foundation.

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<sup>44</sup> [www.nj.gov/state/njsca/assets/pdf/fy21-cultural-trust-act-guidelines.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/state/njsca/assets/pdf/fy21-cultural-trust-act-guidelines.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> <https://nj.gov/state/historical/his-grants.shtml>.

## **Staffing Options for the Future**

We do not believe that staff is needed for the OSHV to implement the majority of the projects in this report. Most of the projects mentioned are small, and consultants or architects are involved that can provide advice to the WTHPC. The organization is fortunate that Dr. McCart provides high quality grant writing and reporting to funders and acts as a liaison between consultants and contractors on their billing and contracts. Both activities are highly labor intensive and often outsourced to consultants. Other historic sites with part time staff do not have as many grant contracts in place at once. You are fortunate that Dr. McCart, a volunteer and commission member, is doing an outstanding job writing and administering grants on your behalf.

The largest project noted in this report is installing permanent, accessible restrooms, which will require the services of an architect and perhaps other specialists to assist the WTHPC in managing this project. We see no need to hire part time staff or consultants, so long as grant writing and contract administration continues to be expertly managed by Dr. McCart.

Part time staff would be helpful once the major construction projects are completed as noted in this report. The site could hire a part time curator, administrator or educator depending on the specific needs of the organization. The Township could also assign a part time ranger to the site if it is open more often to help with interpretation and general management.

In the meantime, it would be wise to begin to identify someone this year who could help Dr. McCart with grant writing and/or grant management so there could be an organized transition should there be an unexpected change. Grant writing and grant management is a highly valuable skilled task that can be taught to someone motivated because they see opportunities to use the skill in the future. Consider creating a volunteer job description and seeking a recruit, young or old, for this important job.

## **Chapter 4: Conclusion**

This report is the culmination of a brief assessment of the heritage tourism potential of Old Stone House Village in Washington Township in Sewell, NJ. This report provides advice to the Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission (WTHPC) volunteers as they work with the companion nonprofit corporation the Friends of the Old Stone House Village (OSHV) to continue to make improvements to the heritage tourism destination at the Olde Stone House Historic Village.

### **Opportunities ahead**

The WTHPC has worked hard over the last five years to bring more visitors to the OSHV through its ever-growing list of seasonal events. Fundraising is ongoing, and the WTHPC has enlisted the Township to match grants to tackle structural problems in the Morgan House. The Friends of OSHV volunteers now open the site each month on the weekend. The future for the Old Stone House Village is bright.

The current volunteers and leadership of the OSHV are entirely capable of implementing every recommendation contained in this report. However, they will need reinforcements and new recruits to take on specific assignments. We believe that the WTHPC, as the steward for the site, needs to prioritize projects contained in this report and tackle them based on the fundraising opportunities ahead.

This report highlights a wide variety of projects, both small and ambitious, to improve the physical site and the organizational capacity of both the Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission and the Friends of Olde Stone House Village. We look forward to seeing your progress over the next several years to further enhance this historic site for local and regional visitors.

## Chapter 5: Credits

Donna Ann Harris wrote this Assessment of the Heritage Tourism Potential for the Old Stone House Village of the Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission. Julia Marie Marchetti, an intern with Heritage Consulting Inc., prepared the visitor services map. Ms. Marchetti is completing a joint graduate degree in Historic Preservation and City and Regional Planning at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, PA. Philip Green, a consultant with Heritage Consulting Inc., designed the general visitor brochure. Will Christman, a recent graduate of the Villanova University Graduate Program in Public History, and Helen Gassmann, a consultant with Heritage Consulting Inc., edited the document.

**Donna Ann Harris** is the principal of Heritage Consulting Inc., a Philadelphia-based consulting firm that works nationwide in several practice areas: downtown and commercial district revitalization, historic preservation, heritage tourism, program evaluation and nonprofit organizational development. Prior to starting her firm fifteen years ago, Ms. Harris was state coordinator for the Illinois Main Street program for two years and the manager of the Illinois suburban Main Street program for four years. During her tenure, Ms. Harris served 56 Illinois Main Street communities, led a staff of 12 and managed a budget of over a million dollars.

Prior to her Main Street career, Ms. Harris spent 15 years as an executive director of three start-up and two mature preservation organizations, each with its own organizational and fundraising challenges. AltaMira Press published her book *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses* in 2007. A second edition of this book will be published in 2020. In the past fifteen years, Ms. Harris has spoken at more than 35 national, regional, and statewide conferences about historic house museums and alternative uses and stewardship responsibilities. Ms. Harris has published articles about reuse of historic house museums in *History News*, the quarterly magazine of the American Association for State and Local History and *Forum Journal*, the quarterly journal of the National for Historic Preservation. Preparing heritage tourism assessments and audience research studies have been a major focus of her practice for the last eight years.

### Contact

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**Appendix A**  
**Updated Final Current Conditions Memo**



Heritage  
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April 21, 2020

To: Nicholas Appice, Chairperson, Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission

CC: Dr. Connie McCart

From: Donna Ann Harris

Subject: Revised Final Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential, Olde Stone House Village, Current Conditions

This memo is the updated final first deliverable for the Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential project, funded by the New Jersey Historic Trust as part of the Historic Site Management grant awarded in 2018 to the Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission (WTHPC).

This is a small project to assist the WTHPC in maximizing the potential of the 6.2-acre Olde Stone House Village (OSHV) as a heritage visitor destination. This Assessment of the Heritage Tourism Potential of the Morgan House, and the four other historic properties moved to the site, will help Washington Township incorporate heritage tourism visitor needs into future planning for the village. The project will also help the WTHPC to increase its organizational capacity, so it can produce new programming and visitor materials, and promote the OSHV to visitors now and in the near future.

Below, we describe the current conditions of the site as it is currently being managed by an all-volunteer WTHPC. The WTHPC is responsible for managing and opening the five houses to the public for special events throughout the year. The Friends of the Olde Stone House Village have committed to opening the site for visitors on the Second Saturday from April through October. We offer our observations and recommendations throughout.

### **History and Significance of the Olde Stone House Village**

There has been an ongoing effort to preserve the historic architecture of Washington Township for more than 50 years. Early preservationists and local historians were involved in saving buildings destined for demolition. These buildings were first moved to the Quay family farm, and then later moved to the OSHV site in the 1980s. The moved buildings were located on a

portion of the original site of the George (Jr.) and Sarah Morgan House. <sup>1</sup>The Morgan House, on its original setting, is significant for its architecture. It is a well-preserved vernacular example of the Georgian style. The house exhibits important architectural elements in its exterior, particularly its stone facade cut and laid like bricks, with stonework quoins in the corners, and a restored beehive oven. It is also significant for its associations with the Morgan family and/or later owneroccupants. The National Register listing is for the Morgan House and one outbuilding located about 100 feet behind the house. This outbuilding is a one-story, gable-front outbuilding, built in the 19th century and constructed of uncoursed ironstone and brick.

Four other buildings were moved adjacent to, but outside, the Morgan House National Register boundaries.<sup>2</sup> The four moved buildings include the original Bunker Hill Presbyterian Church c. 1849; the 1864 Turnersville Post Office and Court House; the Quay Farmhouse c. 1825; and the Blackwood Railroad Station c. 1891. The site, called the Olde Stone House Village, is a venue for several family-oriented, public events throughout the year.

Currently the WTHPC is addressing the structural issues identified in the Morgan House Condition Assessment recently completed by preservation architect Michael Califati in 2019, through a Historic Site Management Grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust. We understand that another \$22,887 grant was awarded to the Township in 2019 for the Morgan House to undertake urgent structural repairs through a Level 1 Capital Preservation Grant again from the New Jersey Historic Trust.

## VISITOR READINESS

### Designations and Promotion as a Visitor Attraction

We understand that the Olde Stone House Village is not currently designated as a Federal or State Scenic Byway. Gloucester County lists only the George Morgan House on their web site list of historic sites in the county, <http://www.gloucestercountynj.gov/about/historical/default.asp>, but the county does not actively market any of these properties as visitor destinations.

The OSHV is listed on the Visit South Jersey tourism website, <https://visitsouthjersey.com/> but not the State of New Jersey tourism web site <https://www.visitnj.org/>. We will provide recommendations in the final report about opportunities for listing on this web site and other social media outlets.

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<sup>1</sup>Joan Berkey, National Register Listing for the George (Jr.) and Sarah Morgan House, accessed December 29, 2019, [https://nj.gov/dep/hpo/1identify/nr\\_nomntns\\_11\\_08\\_2018\\_srb\\_drafts/GLO\\_Washington\\_Twp\\_George\\_Morgan\\_stone\\_hse\\_DRAFT\\_2018-08-13\\_WEB.pdf](https://nj.gov/dep/hpo/1identify/nr_nomntns_11_08_2018_srb_drafts/GLO_Washington_Twp_George_Morgan_stone_hse_DRAFT_2018-08-13_WEB.pdf).

<sup>2</sup>Berkey, National Register Listing.

## Current Site Amenities for Visitors

The Olde Stone House Village is situated in a lovely local park of 6.2 acres along Egg Harbor Road, a major artery in the Township. A walking path connects all the buildings. The site has 1,000 feet of frontage along Egg Harbor Road in Sewell, NJ. A large townhouse development is located to the north and east of the Morgan House, and a single-family housing development to the southeast. The park is partly screened from subdivisions with pine trees. There are two commercial strip malls to the northwest, across Egg Harbor Road. The Village has a parking lot, set apart by a split rail fence, along Egg Harbor Road. The Morgan House, original to the site, is located on a small rise, and there is a smokehouse and a recreated kitchen/herb garden in the rear.

The site has several visitor amenities. There is a wooden gazebo dating from 2000 where casual visitors can sit and have lunch. There is a large gravel and grass parking lot, with parking for about 60 or more cars, but no paved handicapped parking spaces. Overflow parking for large events is located at an adjacent lot behind the Morgan House. For the largest events, the Hunt Club the residential community behind the Village, permits the Commission to use their lot further behind the first one mentioned. A memorial consisting of an open flag pavilion is situated at the west end of the parking lot and is not within the National Register boundaries.<sup>3</sup> Volunteers offer five special events at the site during the year.

The WTHPC prints an event list handout, which is available at the Railroad Station, available at information tables at events and other locations in the Township. The event list is emailed and posted to the site's Facebook page several times a year. It is also printed in the program book for the annual car show. The program book for the car show is a fundraising activity, and includes ads, the event list for the year, and several pages about the history of each building in the village. The program book is available onsite and offsite locations around the time of the event.

The site lacks some basic visitor amenities, including permanent, handicapped accessible restrooms, permanent interpretive signage, a printed visitor brochure available year-round at the site, an e-newsletter, a website designed specifically for visitors, and further online promotional opportunities. All buildings have heat, but only the church is air conditioned. The Morgan House, however, while heated, has no lighting except candles. The site is managed entirely by volunteers affiliated with the Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission and the Friends of the Olde Stone House Village. We will provide information in our final report about each of these items and how the WTHPC can fund these activities in the next few years.

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<sup>3</sup>Berkey, National Register Listing.

## **Second Saturday Tours**

Within the last year, the Friends of the Olde Stone House Village have committed to having interpreters available for regular public hours for tours of the inside of each of the five buildings on the Second Saturday of the month. This is a major achievement in the WTHPC's commitment to sharing the historic village with the public. We recommend that the Friends aggressively market the Second Saturday openings, along with the regular event schedule through traditional and social media to assure a good flow of visitors.

## **New Interpretive Signage**

Currently there are two wooden signs on the property to identify the location as a historic site. Neither of these signs are meant to provide interpretation for a casual visitor who may stop by to look at the buildings. There is one brown wooden sign for the Olde Stone House Village located along Egg Harbor Road with the current OSHV logo. This tall wooden sign is adjacent to the split rail fence along the Egg Harbor Road edge of the property. There is another painted wooden sign closer to the Morgan House which names the park, the James G. Atkinson Historical Site, dedicated October 2001. There are two, old and faded, brown metal highway type, wayfinding signs for the Old Stone House Village close to the boundaries of the property on Egg Harbor Road.

We understand that installation of interpretive signage is a long-term goal of the WTHPC, and WTHPC Board member Dr. McCart. She has identified the interpretive signage that she prefers at the Red Bank Battlefield in National Park, NJ. We learned from a series of emails to Jen Jenofski PhD, the museum curator at the Whithall House, at the Red Bank Battlefield Park, that Metcalfe Design and Architecture, of Philadelphia were the designers who created the interpretive signs. Ms. Jenofski wrote the text and found the historic photos. Metcalfe designed the eight signs through a \$4000 grant from the Gloucester County Cultural and Heritage Commission in 2014.

The Park got a subsequent grant (\$13,000 and \$7000 county match) from the New Jersey Historical Commission for fabrication of the graphics and metal signs by David Egner of Art Guild Inc. in West Deptford NJ. <https://www.artguildinc.com/just-out/> The Park's grounds crew installed the signs. The contact at Metcalfe Design and Architecture is Aaron Goldblatt. His email is [aarong@metdesignarch.com](mailto:aarong@metdesignarch.com) . Their web site is [www.metarchdesign.com](http://www.metarchdesign.com)

The Red Bank Battlefield interpretive signs use contemporary as well as historic photographs along with text to explain the history of particular buildings at the Red Bank Battlefield Park. The interpretive signs are framed in metal, and the interpretive panel is located about waist high (three foot) off the ground and angled for better visitor viewing. These signs are typically three or four foot long. We recommend that each of the five historic buildings at OSHV have an interpretive sign. The architects will advise on placement of the signs.

To plan for the interpretive signs, we are recommending that additional documentary research be undertaken about the four moved buildings. The National Register listing for the Morgan House supplies enough information for that building to make a high quality, informative, interpretive sign.

The historical materials that were provided to us, the room books, are just not adequate to create high quality, history based, text and graphics for the interpretive signs for the four moved buildings. Perhaps there is other data in the files that needs to be collected into one place for use by a historian to write these signs? Regardless, the four houses need better documentation, including title searches, access to wills and inventories collected from early owners, to provide the history and historic context for these buildings.

The Post Office, Railroad Station and Church need additional research on their 19<sup>th</sup> century original use, and 20<sup>th</sup> century adaptation as historic sites. This kind of research by a qualified historian is called an intensive level survey. The historian's research includes a search of the land records for each owner of the buildings, to understand the building's use, wills which may contain furniture and household goods inventories, historic image research, documented changes over time, information about each building's time on the Quay Farm, and eventual move to the OSHV site. Expect to pay in the range of \$10,000 to \$15,000 for this type of research for all four buildings. This intensive level research will also be highly useful for docent training, so that the interpretation of the buildings and the people who lived there/used the buildings, can emerge from this documentary evidence.

We suggest that the WTHPC combine the intensive level survey of the four buildings with a request for five interpretive signs from a matching grant application to the Historic Site Management Grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust, or the New Jersey Historical Commission. If the WTHPC wishes to start work on the interpretive sign project for the Morgan House, then a \$5000 Discover New Jersey License Plate Fund for Heritage Tourism from the New Jersey Historic Trust Heritage Tourism Program might be a good prospect to consider for funding.

### **Explore Listing on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places**

We also recommend that additional research be undertaken by a qualified architectural historical to determine the potential for listing the four remaining buildings in the village for listing on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places. We understand that Historic Cold Spring Village in Cape May County was recently listed in the New Jersey Register as a grouping of moved historic buildings. While these are different situations, undertaking this research would be a worthy project, because listing would make these buildings eligible for New Jersey Historic Trust capital funding. Because they are not listed on the National or New Jersey Registers, they are not eligible for such funding.

### **New General Visitor Brochure**

As part of the heritage tourism assessment project, we have prepared a draft of a general

visitor brochure which can be used as a PDF document for online use, and as a printed version to be used on site and at other locations. The legal sized brochure has photos and a short description of the five buildings.

We are recommending an initial print run of 1,000 brochures. We suggest distributing these brochures at a table staffed by volunteers at any event throughout the year, and at all Second Saturday Open Houses. We also recommend that the general visitor brochure include an insert with the yearly event list/Second Saturday schedule. The general visitor brochure with insert can also be distributed at all the Township Offices, all area libraries, any senior center, and the Gloucester County Historical Society. A member of the WTHPC would need to be responsible for the monthly replenishing of brochures at these locations.

### **Expand Information About OSHV Events**

The WTHPC plans their five events for the year in January. The event list is posted on the Friends of the OSHV web page: <https://www.friendsoftheoldstonehouse.org/events.html>. The Friends of OSHV also lists the Second Saturday dates throughout the year when the site is open for tours and staffed with volunteers.

The OSHV event list is also published at the WTHPC web site:

[https://www.twp.washington.nj.us/government/boards  
commissions/historic\\_preservation  
\\_c\\_ommission/event\\_list.php](https://www.twp.washington.nj.us/government/boards_commissions/historic_preservation_c_ommission/event_list.php).

Washington Township also publishes an annual event list that includes all of the OSVH events: <https://www.twp.washington.nj.us/Park%20Events%202019.pdf>. Please make sure that the Second Saturday activities are included on this list.

We understand that the event list for the year is also posted to the WTHPC social media accounts including Facebook and Instagram, in email blasts, and in hard copy lists handed out at events, and in the car show program book.

We are recommending that the OSHV event list for the year/Second Saturday schedule be designed and printed as an insert for the visitor brochure. The event list can be designed and printed in the form of a rack card on heavier weight card stock, or on the same paper weight and similar design as the visitor brochure itself. We can have our graphic designer create this rack card or insert to coordinate with the visitor brochure for a small additional fee if you wish. Work with the printer to determine if you want them to insert the event list in the visitor brochure or have the WTHPC insert the event list in the general visitor brochure, which might be an additional cost.

Dr. McCart also explained that some county grant reviewers did not understand which events during the year were primarily history focused versus fundraisers. It might be clearer if brief descriptions can be developed for all the major events so that their intent is clear,

whether the event is meant as a fundraiser for operating or capital expenses, or as a history-oriented event. The activities that have a historical focus such as the use of re-enactors, if there will be open hearth cooking at the Morgan House, or if a historic garden interpreter will be available, should be explained. Note too if there will be other activities specifically for children, particularly at Second Saturday activity. Explain if the event is meant mainly a fundraiser like the Halloween Paranormal event, car show, or holiday event.

### **Redundant Facebook Pages**

We were surprised to count at least six Facebook pages for the Olde Stone House Village. Having so many Facebook pages is confusing for visitors. Only one Facebook page appears to be “official.”

<https://www.facebook.com/oldestonehousehistoricvillage/>

This Facebook page has 2300 followers. Note that this page includes the word Historic in its name, which appears in no other website. This page seems to be kept current and has many photos of events.

<https://www.facebook.com/Oldestonehousefriends/>

This is the Friends of the Olde Stone House Village Facebook page. This Facebook page appears to be active with 39 likes/fans. This page should include listings of the events for the year and promote the Village and the activities of the Friends.

There are four other Facebook pages, that have variant spellings of the organization’s name, and were taken from a simple Google Search undertaken in late December 2019. We understand that the WTHPC does not control any of the following Facebook pages, and the original administrators may have moved on, forgotten the passwords, or are unreachable, and thus the WTHPC may be unable to remove them from Facebook. It may be worth making one more attempt to contact the administrators for these pages to ask if they would remove these pages from Facebook to limit confusion.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Old-Stone-Village/273657602713460>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Old-Stone-Village/273657602713460>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Old-Stone-House-VillageGloucster-County/284049654946128>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/957794480924522/>

### **New Permanent Handicapped Accessible Restroom Facilities**

There are no permanent, handicapped accessible, public restrooms on site. The WTHPC rents potta-pottys for their public events, but we are uncertain if portable restrooms will be available for Second Saturday events. Regardless, a restroom is a basic visitor amenity. The lack of a permanent, handicapped accessible restroom has an impact on how much the Parks and Recreation Department can charge for rental fees at the village. We understand that placing a new permanent restroom is complicated by the fact that a sewer line would have to be laid from

an existing line, which is likely an expensive cost. It is unclear to us how much of a priority installing new restrooms are for WTHPC now. We urge the WTHPC to make installing permanent handicapped accessible restrooms a high priority, primarily because restrooms can be funded in part with matching grants from the New Jersey Historic Trust Capital Grant.

### **Online Promotional Opportunities**

Websites are a basic visitor amenity. Right now, there is no one online location (other than the official Facebook page) for a visitor to learn about the property, its open hours, history of each building, learn about upcoming events, and volunteer opportunities, present an archive of all published reports about the property and the ability to donate online. The website of the Friends of the Olde Stone House Village is a great start, and it can be expanded if desired. Otherwise the WTHPC can create its own web site with all the information noted above. We will provide more information about heritage tourism website components we recommend in the final report. We will also provide advice on posting information on the state's tourism web site and updating information on VisitSouthJersey.com in the final report.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

### **Fundraising Successes**

The Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission is an all-volunteer municipal entity, with its members appointed by the Township. This group has had very good success at grant writing and raising funds to match state matching grants over the years. The WTHPC has raised matching funds for the National Register Nomination for the Morgan House, the Condition Assessment for the Morgan House, and structural repairs of the Morgan House, all from the New Jersey Historic Trust. The WTHPC's fundraising has paid for the match for the restoration of the Bunker Hill Presbyterian Church's stained-glass windows and placement of plexiglass protective covers on the windows. Today, the group has two active grants from the New Jersey Historic Trust: 2019 Level 1 Capital Preservation grant of \$22,887 for the Morgan House and a small award \$5001 from the Historic Sites Management Grant for an Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential (this \$6667 total project).

### **Volunteer Recruitment**

The WTHPC is a dedicated group of volunteers that have been working for years on special events that are designed to bring visitors to the site. In 2011, the Friends of the Olde Stone House Village was formed, and they have committed to opening the site on the second Saturday of each month during the visitor season, when volunteers offer walking tours of each of the buildings.

We understand that there is a general concern about recruiting and retaining volunteers for the special events held throughout the year. Most of the special events require scores of men and women to set up, host particular activities, and finally to tear down the event, remove trash and clean up the site. We provide advice about working with volunteers below.

## **Volunteer Job Descriptions**

The current crop of volunteers are highly dedicated to the Olde Stone House Village. They work hard to produce five events throughout the year. The Friends of the OSHV have also moved to open the site on Second Saturdays for visitors.

At one of our early meetings we recommended creating brief volunteer job descriptions for specific tasks for which the WTHPC wanted to recruit. We provided a volunteer job description for a newsletter editor, along with a checklist for creating such job descriptions (attached). It has been our experience working with volunteers for more than 20 years, that volunteers are more likely to step up for assignments if they are for short-term projects (such as one event) or for a specific task that has an end date.

## **Investing in the Volunteer Coordinator**

Soliciting individuals to help would go faster by investing and supporting the current volunteer coordinator. The job of the volunteer coordinator is hard work. The volunteer coordinator works to: develop and create job descriptions with advice from volunteer leaders; solicit and recruit individuals to fill the jobs advertised through social media and personal solicitation; match a potential volunteer with a job suitable to them; connect the volunteer to the supervisor for a likely project; check upon the volunteer to make sure they are put to work quickly and are enjoying their work; and finally to encourage volunteers to participate in a recognition event or party each year to celebrate the work of all volunteers. We provide further advice about volunteer recognition and recruiting groups of volunteers to help below.

## **Recruiting Groups of Volunteers**

We understand that most of the volunteers for the OSHV are recruited “retail,” meaning one-at-a-time. We recommend volunteer job descriptions for most of these activities. While “retail recruitment” is a highly effective recruitment method, we encourage the WTHPC to do more to recruiting groups of people to help, such as clubs, teams, or other nonprofit organizations. We understand that the high school football team, college fraternities and sororities, and scout groups have been recruited in the past. These groups bring large numbers of volunteers for a specific project or event, might be highly useful for some aspects of your current special events. WTHPC board members can continue to reach out to these groups and others like church groups, sports leagues, Rotary, or other area service clubs. Review the special event tasks which require eight or more people. These activities might include directing cars to parking spaces, setting up tents, moving heavy equipment, or picking up trash at the end of an event. Prepare a short volunteer job description and solicit for a group to partner with for this activity (see one below). Groups might be motivated to participate if there is an opportunity in the job description for them to raise funds for their own team/event/activity at a table staffed by a volunteer affiliated with their group. We call these “quid pro quo incentives” and they are an important element for wholesale volunteer recruitment. We offer a sample group volunteer job description below.

## **Parking Lot Assistance Volunteer Job Description**

The WTHPC is seeking a supervised group of 10 people (over 12 years old with adult supervisors) to help the WTHPC manage and direct cars to the parking spaces during one of the five special events held during the year. This is a perfect opportunity for a school or church club, Boy or Girl Scout Troop, school team or other organized group of students or young adults to work together with adult leadership and earn funds for their project. The WTHPC will encourage attendees to tip the individual who directs them to a parking space. If your group is willing to staff the parking lot with two responsible adults and at least 10 other people who can help direct cars to the lot and point them to the correct parking spots. The lot can hold up to 60 cars. Anticipated hours would be from 7AM until 5PM for one day. The WTHPC will provide a parking map, safety vests for all, striping of the lot, and work with the Township police to direct traffic. The volunteer group would have to be available for the entire time and work closely with a WTHPC Board member who will be the supervisor and volunteer in charge of this aspect of the special event. Please send a contact name, cell phone and email for further information to name, cell phone and email address of coordinator for WTHPC.

## **Volunteer Recognition**

We understand that all volunteers for each event are thanked on the OSHV Facebook page, but specific individuals are not named. We understand that some people may prefer not to have their names posted and their wishes must be respected. But generally, posting individual names of volunteers is a welcome recognition opportunity and helps with retention. We have learned through our decades of working with volunteers that volunteers need to be thanked three times and in three different ways: in person, in writing, and in front of their peers, in order to find at least one way that will have relevance for the individual volunteer.

There are several ways to highlight individual volunteer involvement with the WTHPC. A story in each e-newsletter (discussed in final report) could identify all the volunteers by name who participated in the most recent event(s). Photos of key volunteers in action might accompany these newsletter stories. Ideally, these stories/photos should also be published on the OSHV Facebook and Instagram pages to offer another recognition opportunity. Personal notes of thanks are also highly valued by some volunteers and are a best practice.

We understand in the past there have been volunteer thank you dinners with awards, but this event was not held in 2019. We encourage the WTHPC to host some kind of volunteer recognition event every year. Those with several years of service can be recognized with service pins (five years, ten years, etc.) at the yearly recognition event.

## **Visitor Services Map of the Area**

The revised and final Visitor Services Map is attached.

## **Final Report Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential**

We are currently preparing the final report for the Assessment of Heritage Tourism Potential for this project. In it we will identify short- and long-term projects for the site. The report will contain information about:

#### Chapter 1. Introduction

- a) Overview and statement about funding from NJHT
- b) Brief history and current conditions (this memo)

#### Chapter 2. Short Term Projects: One or Two Years

- a) Start an e-newsletter
- b) Gather more documentary information about the four moved historic buildings through an intensive level survey
- c) Fund and install interpretive signage for all five buildings
- d) Create an OSHV website or expand current Friends of the OSHV website
- e) Increase the number of days open per month with programming for the kitchen/herb garden
- f) Expand social media promotion
- g) Plan and install permanent handicapped accessible restrooms

#### Chapter 3. Longer Term Projects: Three to Five Years

- a) Provide more documentary information about Morgan House through an Interpretive Plan and Furnishings Plan
- b) Create a brochure series on each building on site
- c) Parking lot improvements: paving, handicapped parking spaces, and lighting improvements
- d) Review current docent training once additional documentary information is in hand
- e) Consider creating a five-year strategic plan to plan further growth and development of OSHV, including future staffing options.

#### Chapter 4. Conclusion

#### Chapter 5. Credits

#### Appendix A. Revised Current Conditions Memo

#### Appendix B. Visitor Services Map

## Appendix C. General Visitor Brochure for OSHV

### **Conclusion**

This memo discusses the current conditions at the Olde Stone House Village as the Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission considers how to expand its heritage tourism efforts over the next three to five years. We will supply a draft final report for the project, based on the outline above, after we receive your comments on this memo, a revised and final general visitor brochure, and a revised and final Visitor Services Map.

### **Attached:**

Volunteer job description, newsletter editor

Checklist for volunteer job descriptions

Final revised the general visitor brochure

Information on printing of general interest brochure

Final revised Visitor Services Map



Title: New E-Newsletter writer and photographer

Mission statement: Fill in your mission statement here

Description: We need a volunteer to help us start a monthly e-newsletter using a Mail Chimp free platform. You will need to have access to a computer to input the news stories about our events we are promoting and the emails we will be collecting from people who attend our events. Learn more about Mail Chimp here.

<https://mailchimp.com/pricing/>

The newsletter writer will contact other board members and volunteers looking for ideas for articles—between 3 and 5 per newsletter each month would be a good start. You will identify when to send out the newsletter each month based on the big event; we are promoting that month. You will write the copy and submit it as a word document to Connie McCart who will proofread it will serve as the overall copy editor. You can write about the most recent event as a recap, about the history of the village, restoration projects underway or profile notable volunteers working for the organization.

You will insert the stories from your copy-edited word document into the Mail Chimp platform along with any photos you take to accompany the articles. You will also input the new emails into the Mail Chimp platform each month.

Time commitment: We estimate that this work will take about 10 hours a month. We are looking for an initial 3-month commitment. If you like the work, then please tell us that you wish to continue.

Skills needed: This is a great job for someone who likes to write and has good communication skills. You will interview visitors or event chairs to learn about the event in advance so that you can write a compelling article about why visitors should attend. Skills needed are the ability to write and passion for telling others about the opportunities to be involved with our organization.

Reimbursement: We will reimburse you for any expenses within two weeks of receiving your receipts.

Deadlines: We would like to begin to send out our new newsletter in July, so please contact Connie McCart by June 15 if you are interested.

Supervision: Your supervisor for this project is the Board member Connie McCart. Her email is \_\_\_\_\_ and phone number \_\_\_\_\_. Please contact her via email or phone

Completion of Assignment: Please keep Connie McCart up to date each month so she can report on your progress at the monthly board meeting. Please submit your volunteer time log monthly. Please attend our annual volunteer picnic held each year, date to be announced. Please check our website or Facebook page for more volunteer assignments. The list of opportunities is updated every month.

Thank you for agreeing to volunteer for the Old Stone House Village of the Washington Township Historical Commission. We hope you have a good volunteer experience.

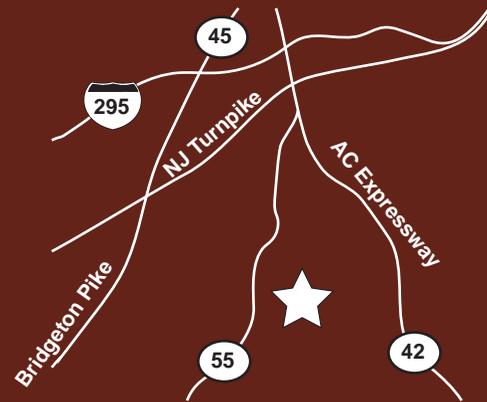


The Olde Stone House Historic Village is owned by Washington Township, NJ, and managed and programmed by the Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission. It was created by local citizens in 1983 to bring together four historic buildings to a location near The Morgan House. The park on which all the buildings stand is named in honor of James G. Atkinson, who was born in The Morgan House and was a prominent local elected official.

# The Olde Stone House Historic Village

## Tours & Family Friendly Events All Year Long

Washington Township ∞ New Jersey



208 Egg Harbor Rd. • Washington Township  
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 /OldeStoneHouseHistoricVillage

 @Olde\_Stone\_House\_Village

Funding for this brochure has been made possible in part through the Preserve New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the NJ Historic Trust - State of New Jersey.



Photo: Olde Stone House Village

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Photos: Olde Stone House Village

Photo: Donna Ann Harris

# Discover Our Historic Buildings



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Consulting Inc.

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Informational Brochure for Olde Stone House Village  
Concept development and writing funded by the New Jersey Historic Trust

#### Project Description

- Project is to write and collect photos for an informational brochure for Olde Stone House Village by Heritage Consulting Inc. as a work for hire
- Project to write brochure is funded with grant funds from the New Jersey Historic Trust
- Design and printing of brochure to be paid for through other grants or from Washington Township HPC
- Photos from Heritage Consulting Inc. and Washington Township HPC members
- Recommend creation of insert with yearly calendar listings for the year, funded by Washington Township HPC

#### Brochure Specifications

- Legal size, 8.5" x 14", two folds into an 8.5" x 3.5" to fit into #10 envelope and common rack card racks
- Printed as four color, high quality paper. Designer will suggest best type paper
- Will be proofread by a copy editor
- Brochure to be designed by Philip Green under contract to Heritage Consulting Inc. His fee is \$200 for design, two rounds of revision and liaison with printer. He will supply PDF for review, and InDesign document for printer. Client will pay for design and printing—these costs were not included in the NJHT grant proposal
- Recommend printing by CRW Printers in Pennsauken, NJ. They produced high quality work for Camden County History Alliance at a very reasonable cost. This cost not in the NJHT grant proposal
- Recommend first printing of 1000 pieces
- Recommend creating a yearly event insert of 8.5" x 3.5" size, colored paper with black ink, cut to fit, to be inserted by WTHPC into brochure to identify the whole calendar of events for the year with dates, 1000 pieces. Alternatively, this could be a rack card. The cost for design and printing of the insert or the rack card are not included in NJHT grant proposal.
- Subsequent printings paid for by WTHPC

## Review and Approvals

- First review by Connie McCart
- Second revision by Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission
- Third and final revision approved by Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission
- Two rounds of reviews with designer Philip Green as agreed in his scope of work
- Final designed brochure must be reviewed and approved in advance of printing by New Jersey Historic Trust and their logo must appear on the document with appropriate credit line. NJHT paying for the writing of concept development and writing of brochure.

## Use

- This is a general informational brochure. It is not meant to solicit memberships or volunteers or provide dates for annual events. The brochure provides basic information about the buildings that make up the village and to note that the Church can be rented. Recommend creating an insert for dates for events each year.
- The brochure should be available at the following locations:
  - Inside all five Olde Stone House Village buildings
  - Available at all events at Olde Stone House Village event table
  - Available at Township Offices
  - Available at all Township libraries, hotels, and with WTHPC personnel to distribute and resupply brochures when they run out

Prepared by Donna Ann Harris , Heritage Consulting Inc. October 8, 2019



## **The Best Volunteer Job Descriptions CHECKLIST**

1. Mission of the organization—Tell the potential volunteer what the organization does.
2. Job title—make it real and specific—“Volunteer Web Designer” or “Downtown Fall Clean Up—10 people needed.”
3. What you want the volunteer to do, in detail—tell them if this is a task that has a limited time commitment or a long-term assignment (you will have more luck filling short term assignments). Break down large tasks (like an auction) into small bits—distribute 100 posters, rather than manage the whole PR effort. This should be a general description, not how to do the task (the volunteer will do it “their way” regardless).
4. Benefits to the volunteer to do the task—help the organization, meet new people, learn a new skill, use their skills for community betterment, meet school requirements, etc.
5. How many hours will it take—your best estimate for the specific task. If the assignment is long term like a committee chair, tell them how many times a month the committee meets, for how long, how many times a month, also include any time for preparing for the meetings. If tending to the flower garden is a weekly task, make sure you include this.
6. Can this project be done with others or as a group? Family projects that can be done in a day might be worth considering. Also groups of friends or clubs could also be a potential source of volunteers (think wholesale recruitment). Be open to non-traditional options to getting work done such as co-chairs or small groups of friends who take responsibility for projects. Can this work be done by a student (specify ages that are appropriate) or an unpaid intern?
7. How the volunteer will get reimbursed for any money they spend on this task—be specific if you need receipts and how soon they must be submitted—“within two weeks of submission.”
8. Location constraints—say if the task must be done in the office during office work hours, or any other location. Be specific if there are constraints or if the task “can be done on your schedule.”
9. Any equipment that is needed and if the organization will provide. Also note if the task requires specific software programs or access to internet, or specific platforms (MAC vs. PC).

10. Supervisor—list the Supervisor’s name, title, phone (work and home), cell phone number, email address. Include a note if this person is staff or another volunteer.

11. How the volunteer should track their time— what forms to use, how often to submit the form and to whom the time sheet should go.

12. Any training your organization will provide for the volunteer to do this task. Will you send them to training and pay for it? Will someone coach them to do the job? Do they have to attend any orientation before doing the job? Is there any training needed? If not, say so.

13. How the volunteer will be recognized for their service (remember 3 times, 3 ways!)— Describe how their service will be noted, such as in the newsletter, at an event, by the supervisor, annual volunteer appreciation dinner, with a tee shirt, etc.

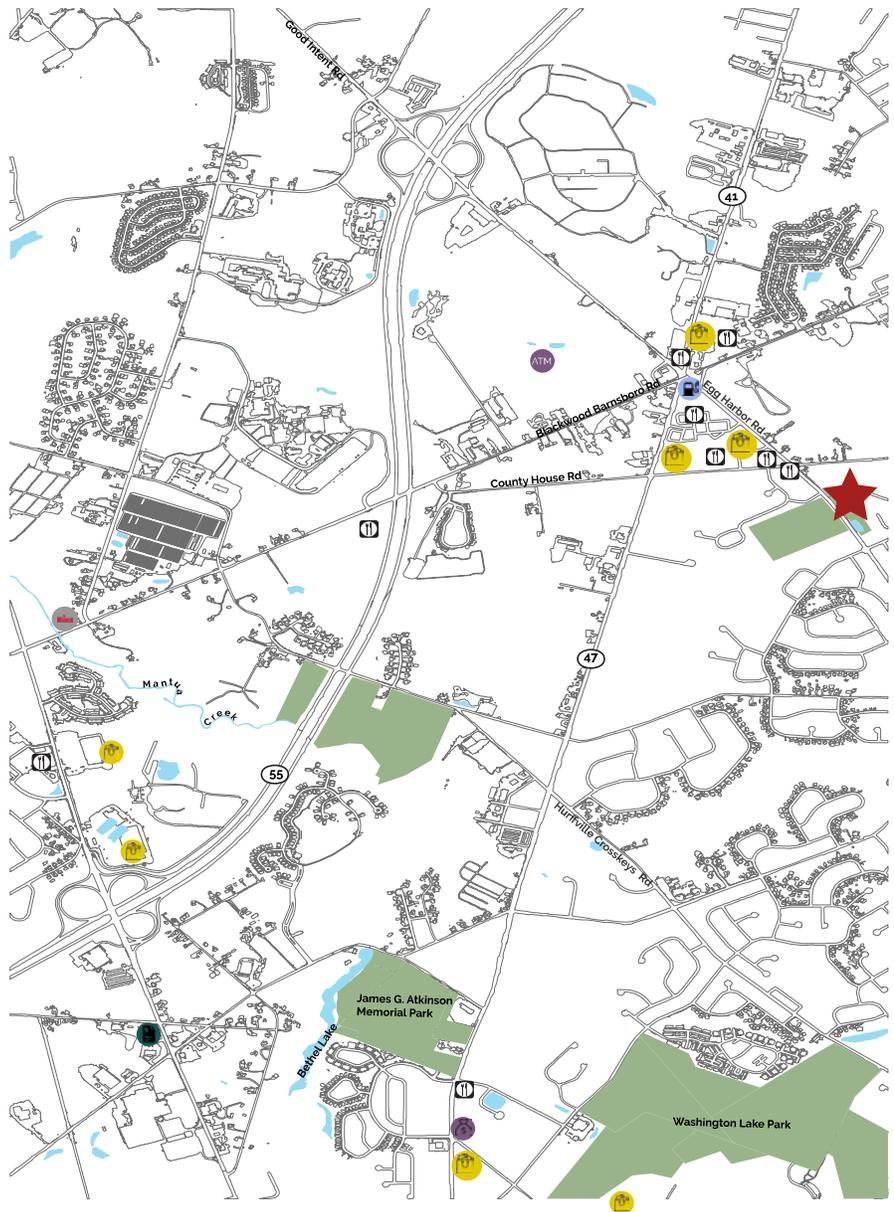
14. Deadline for completion of task or how often the person must speak to the supervisor to check on progress.

15. Date the job description was posted.

## Appendix B. Updated Current Conditions Map

# Services for Visitors

near Olde Stone House Historic Village Washington Township, NJ



**KEY**

- ★ Olde Stone House Village
- 🍴 Restaurants & Quick Eats
- Wawa WaWa
- 🛒 Retail
- 🏪 Pharmacy
- 🛢 Gas Station
- ATM ATM
- 🏦 Bank

0 0.2 0.4 0.8 Miles

**Appendix C. Updated General Visitor Brochure**

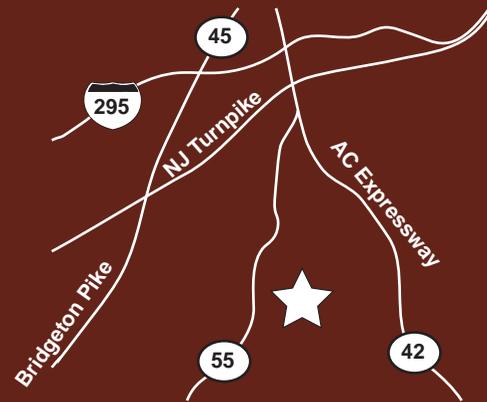


The Olde Stone House Historic Village is owned by Washington Township, NJ, and managed and programmed by the Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission. It was created by local citizens in 1983 to bring together four historic buildings to a location near The Morgan House. The park on which all the buildings stand is named in honor of James G. Atkinson, who was born in The Morgan House and was a prominent local elected official.

# The Olde Stone House Historic Village

# Tours & Family Friendly Events All Year Long

Washington Township ∞ New Jersey



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