

Historical Commission of Birmingham Township
Minutes of the meeting of April 25, 2017

The regular meeting of the Birmingham Township Historical Committee was called to order by Chairman Carla Westerman at 7:21 pm in the township building.

PRESENT: HC Members: Matt Bedwell, Mike Forbes, Carla Westerman, Kate Marshall, Nancy Needham

ABSENT:

Others present: Anne Siemer, RPOS Chairperson

Ms. Westerman made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 28, 2017 meeting with the noted corrections/changes. Mr. Bedwell seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Update on HR

There was a brief discussion about finding a mutual time to have a work session to discuss and figure how to share information better on the google drive, upload photos of the HRs, and determine the final criteria for evaluating Historic Resources in the township.

Ms. Westerman relays to the group that she asked what specifically the BOS wants from the HC and Mr. Conklin indicated they want a list of criteria for evaluating HRs in the township that should be protected. From a conversation with Karen Marshall, it was determined that a good starting point for the group would be to review the East Pikeland historic resource criteria. The group reviews this and arrives at a first draft of the possible criteria for Birmingham Township. This is just a draft and will be further reviewed at the work session and future meetings.

Proposed Criteria:

- A. Is on the National Register of Historic Places;
- B. Prior to 1940;
- C. Is relevant to or associated with the significant development, heritage or culture of Township;
- D. Is associated with a person of historic significance in the Township or elsewhere;
- E. Is representative of a distinctive architectural style, vernacular building type, craftsmanship or is the work of a notable architect or builder;
- F. Is the site or location of a notable event considered to have had a significant effect on the Township;
- G. Is a distinctive example reflecting the cultural, social or ethnic heritage of the Township;
- H. An archeological site that has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information in prehistory or history.

This list of criteria will likely be able to add items/resources to our Historical Resources such as Sandy Hollow, the Lafayette Monument and the two cemeteries.

Mr. Forbes states that the current method the township uses for determining HRs is based on the PHMC classification system – which includes different classes of HRs such as Class I, Class II and Class III. The

proposed new method will replace this classification system. Mr. Forbes wants the group to be able to defend their decision to make this change.

The next step in the process for this new criteria is to develop a guideline. Originally Mary DeNadai was planning to assist with this next step, however, she is too busy currently with her job. She has provided the names of two architectural historians to contact: Bob Wise (formerly with the Brandywine Conservancy) and Jane Dorchester. Mary will assist the group with the grant paperwork in order to obtain funding for this step of the project. She suggested contacting three people for this proposal and said they will likely get back to the group within 4 to 6 weeks.

Public

Anne Siemer, Chairperson of RPOS is in attendance tonight to discuss three items.

First, she had heard about the town tour and wants to see if the RPOS can assist in any way. Ms. Westerman provides a brief update which indicates a couple areas in which volunteers are still needed.

Secondly, RPOS is working on adding additional signage at Birmingham Hill. They also have some additional money in their budget to develop new inserts for the signs at Sandy Hollow. They will not have new frames. Instead they will plan to rotate the signs periodically into the existing frames.

Mr. Forbes asked what is happening with the recently installed cannon. Ms. Siemer indicates that it is deteriorating due to exposure to the elements. The installer is planning to pick it up and repair it.

Ms. Marshall asked about another reenactment scheduled for later this year. It is scheduled for September 16-17 of this year. She asked if it is possible for the mowing schedule to be adjusted to accommodate the ground nesting birds that are currently living there. Ms. Siemer will discuss this with the farmer and try to make an accommodation.

Lastly, she wanted to discuss the barn on the Cacchio property with the group. She noted that the BOS has had the barn evaluated and that there are many structural issues with the barn. It is not safe for people to use. She is asking the HC if there is any historical significance to the barn that would help in the decision making process. The items to be considered are how much will it cost to restore it to be able to be used and also what would it be used for by either the Township or the County. Ms. Westerman indicates that according to Mary DeNadai (from their township driving tour) she indicated that the barn was vernacular (typical mid-19th century Chester County barn) and built in the 1840's.

Ms. Westerman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20pm. Seconded by Mr. Forbes and voted unanimously. The next meeting will be May 23, 2017 at 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Boorse
HC Secretary