

**Historical Commission of Birmingham Township
Minutes of the meeting of April 23, 2019**

The regular meeting of the Birmingham Township Historical Committee was called to order by Chairperson, Mike Forbes at **7:21 pm** in the township building.

PRESENT: HC Members: Mike Forbes, Kelly Fleming, Jeff Janofsky, John Ponticello

ABSENT: Matt Bedwell

Others present: Dan Hill (member BOS), Chris Lang (H#19), Edward Brower, Daniel Campbell, Constantine and Eleni Anastasiadis

Mr. Janofsky made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 26, 2019 meeting. Ms. Fleming seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Review Proposal for Birmingham Meeting House (HR#19) 1245 Birmingham Rd.

Mr. Chris Lang is in attendance representing the Meeting to present the proposed changes to the Birmingham Meeting House. He presented photographs and a brief history of the Meetinghouse and a site map to show where they are proposing to add the new ADA accessible bathroom. Over the years the original building has had some additions added on to it to meet various needs. One of those additions added in 1963 was a shed area to provide needed storage. They are proposing to add the bathroom in the corner of the existing shed. They are planning to match all the existing exterior siding - vertical wood stained to match the existing siding. There will be a window added with six sashes and a pre-hung door. They have met with HARB and have received HARB approval for the proposed materials.

Mr. Forbes asked about the neighbor notifications that were required for this meeting. Mr. Lang indicates that the secretary of the Meetinghouse sent out the notifications to the neighbors within 500'. However, he does not have the proof of those mailings with him this evening. He will get the notification list and proof to the township on Thursday.

Mr. Forbes went through the answers to the required HC form at the meeting.

Mr. Forbes made a motion to recommend the BOS approve the proposed modification to add an ADA accessible bathroom to the existing porch area of the Birmingham Meeting House (HR#19). Motion seconded by Mr. Janofsky and passed unanimously.

Review proposed Landscape Plan for 1360 Old Wilmington Pike subdivision related to the screening of (HR#29 located at 1370 Old Wilmington Pike)

Mr. Adam Brower is in attendance with the applicants (Mr. and Mrs. Anastasiadis) and Daniel Campbell (Architect who prepared the Historic Resource Impact Study). Tonight he is presenting the proposed screening for the historic resource (#29) located adjacent to the proposed minor subdivision at 1360 Old Wilmington Pike. Additionally, Mr. Campbell has provided the HRIS for historic resource #29 located 1370 Old Wilmington Pike. Mr. Brower provided a brief background of the project and apologized for the oversight of not coming back to the HC prior to this. He provided a large scale proposed landscape plan for the committee to reference.

Mr. Janofsky asked what the existing distance is between the current two historic structures. Mr. Brower indicates it's approximately 85 feet. He indicates that the proposed new house on that lot will be located further away at an approximate distance of 130 feet.

Mr. Forbes asked what the existing driveway elevation is and what the elevation change will be for the common driveway from the further two houses in the subdivision. Mr. Brower indicates that the current driveway has rather steep elevation, but to make it a common driveway and meet the existing code they are planning to lower the driveway as it comes off of Old Wilmington Pike by 5% or 6%. Once the common driveway gets to the grade of where the current house exists on the property, the driveway will then remain at the current grade as it extends through the property to lots #1 and #2. Mr. Forbes issue with this is that the future owners of lots #1 and #2 will thus be driving uphill to a point and then downhill to get to the common entrance. This will cause the lights of those vehicles to shine into the windows at the existing house at 1370 Old Wilmington Pike. Discussion ensued about the additional cost to eliminate the upward grade of the driveway that currently uses the natural slope of the land. Mr. Brower states that it would not be cost prohibitive as it would simply be moving dirt. However, they would need to grade it to minimize the slopes and in doing any excavating, there can be negative damage to existing trees on the property depending on the species and their root depth. Mr. Forbes would like to have the common driveway graded to be consistently at the 480' elevation. That is only an excavation of 2 feet of dirt and Mr. Brower indicates that is doable.

Mr. Janofsky asked Mr. Brower to comment on the proposed screening to protect the historic resource. He indicated that the two areas they thought most relevant were the driveway and adding some additional trees along the property line to fill in what is already there. They had a landscape architect do a survey of the existing trees and recommend some additional plantings. There was also discussion about the existing trees and the fact that they are not all indicated on the landscape plan. Generally these surveys only show existing trees larger than 6" in diameter. The current proposed trees and their locations are noted on the plan. The proposed trees are 6 trees in total - 3 White Fir and 3 Leyland Cypress. The specimens will be a minimum of 6 feet tall. Mr. Forbes asked if they considered adding any lower vegetation options (i.e. holly bushes or something equivalent) that would screen the lower portion of the house when the other trees grow taller and don't provide significant screening anymore. Mr. Brower agrees that lower plantings is a good solution to help mitigate any impact and also will provide different levels of buffering. Mr. Brower will talk with the landscape architect to see if there are any other specimens to provide the lower buffering.

Mr. Ponticello asked if they are planning to remove any of the existing trees. Mr. Brower indicated that they are not planning to remove any of the existing trees along the buffer zone. Only two or three trees that will be impacted by the future development area.

Mr. Forbes asked again about the distance between the existing historic resource at 1370 Old Wilmington Pike and the proposed new house on lot #3. He referenced Ordinance 122-36.6 which indicates the standard distance between an existing historic resource and new structure should be 200 feet. Mr. Brower indicates that the township has discretion in that distance when it is being offset by appropriate buffering. They are hoping that by supplementing the buffer with additional plantings the township will allow the lesser distance. If the applicant was able to meet the 200 foot distance and still be able to meet all of the other zoning requirements (storm water management, etc) for that lot, they would do so.

Mr. Campbell discussed the Historic Resource Impact Study he conducted and indicated that due to southern orientation of the house at 1370 Old Wilmington Pike, that the back of the house is actually the part exposed to the proposed new development.

Mr. Forbes made a contingent recommendation to the BOS that they accept the proposed landscape plan for the 3 lot subdivision at 1360 Old Wilmington Pike with regard to the buffering for historic resource #29 located at 1370 Old Wilmington Pike. The recommendation is subject to the following modifications:

1. That the common driveway accessing lots #1 and #2 be lowered to a grade height of 480' - which is lowering the grade 2 feet from the current grade;
2. That the proposed screening trees between HR#29 and this property be supplemented with lower plantings that will remain intact all year long such as holly bushes or equivalent plantings as recommended by the landscape architect;
3. On the Existing Features plan - show the trees that will be removed;
4. Add a note on the proposed Landscape Plan that the trees not shown on the Plan are to remain (i.e. those that are not indicated because they are smaller than 6" in diameter).

Mr. Janofsky seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

New Business

Ms. Fleming indicates that she will have an update on the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force signage next month.

Mr. Janofsky indicated that he has not heard from Sheila Fleming regarding the Vision Partnership Program. Mr. Forbes will follow-up with Sheila on this issue.

Mr. Forbes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:44pm. Seconded by Mr. Ponticello and voted unanimously. The next meeting will be May 28, 2019 at 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Boorse
HC Secretary