

Historical Commission of Birmingham Township
Minutes of the meeting of January 26, 2016

The regular meeting of the Birmingham Township Historical Committee was called to order by Chairman Matt Bedwell at 7:26 pm in the township building.

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

ABSENT:

Others present: Randall Spackman, Mark and Donna Landon, Brad and Kendra Adey

Mr. Bedwell moved that the minutes of the November 24, 2015 be approved. Motion to approve minutes was seconded by Ms. Westerman. Motion passed unanimously.

Historical Commission Organizational Discussion

Ms. Needham nominated Matt Bedwell for Chairman. Ms. Westerman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bedwell nominated Mike Forbes as Vice Chairperson. Ms. Marshall seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Bedwell nominated Jennifer Boorse as secretary. Nancy Needham seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

1301 Birmingham Rd., Certificate of Appropriateness (Tax Parcel #65-4-16)- Adey residence

The applicant (Brad and Kendra Adey) sent certified notices to surrounding property owners within 500 feet of the property regarding the application being on the agenda tonight. Some of those neighbors were in attendance this evening.

Brad and Kendra Adey present their new proposed house plan from a totally new architect. The new proposed house was presented to HARB last week and meets their requirements. Ms. Needham stated that this proposed design looks much better and thanked them for listening to the comments from the previous meeting and re-designing the house and location on the property. The Adey's stated they are much happier with this plan and because it is a less expensive design to build and it will allow them to spend more money on the actual materials.

Thomas Kummer, landscape architect, presented the site plan and discusses the cluster area in which they are proposing the new residence. He showed the existing wooded areas on the site plan and showed where the new house will be in relation to the current existing house and barn. They are placing the house in a location that will allow them to save the key heritage trees including one that is 36" diameter trees. He presented another illustration that showed a picture of the existing plantings. Mr. Bedwell asked if the construction will negatively affect the root zones of these trees? Mr. Kummer stated that they will have an arborist (Barlett Tree Experts) come out to prune the trees and place fences around the areas that need to be protected prior to the start of construction. The builder is also aware of challenges that saving these trees presents.

Discussion ensued about whether it makes sense to consider moving the driveway? Mr. Kummer stated that they are planning to cut back the shrubbery and trees along Birmingham Road and at the corner of Thornbury Road to assist with visibility when exiting the driveway. Mrs. Adey stated that cutting back the shrubbery and trees along Birmingham road will make it safer and also allow the township residents to see the actual historic home on the property when they drive past. Mr. Adey stated they do not want to move the driveway because it will cause more issues; a couple of which include land disturbance, possibly affecting the trail easements through the property and the Adey's would still have a potential safety issue if they were making a left onto Thornbury Road. There was a brief discussion of using eco-pavers for the portion of the driveway closest to the existing trees. Mr. Kummer will take this into consideration as they move forward with the plans.

Randall Spackman is in attendance at this meeting wearing two hats – one on behalf of the Randall Spackman Family Trust and also as a member of the Thornbury Historical Commission. National Land Trusts and Thornbury Township are concerned about the visibility of the new structure as you look south from the preserved land. He also noted that the groups he represents plan to put a pull-off monument along Thornbury Road. Mr. Spackman would like to see a Plan B if something happens to one of the existing trees and also would like to see if the applicant is in agreement with planting some conifers (east of the barn and north of the house) to screen the house from view of the surrounding properties and also in agreement that such planting would be maintained in perpetuity. Mr. and Mrs. Adey stated they are amenable to such additional plantings as it will not affect their view from the patio.

Ms. Needham asked Mr. Spackman when the agreement that he is addressing was instituted and if it was made in respect to this particular property. He stated the agreement was made in relation to the corridor affecting Wylie, O'Dell and Spackman. This agreement dates back to 1991 when the Thornbury development was being built. Ms. Westerman confirmed that the screening he is looking for would be closer to the house and barn rather than along the road. Mr. Spackman agreed that closer to the house and barn will allow for a better viewshed of the open fields for reenactments.

Ms. Westerman asked if the issues regarding the interior of the house for its use as a storage facility/office had been resolved. Mrs. Adey said the house is being kept heated at around 50 degrees. The kitchen appliances had been removed by previous owner and that they plan to cap the faucets in the kitchen and bathrooms.

They plan to leave the clawfoot tub in one of the bathrooms. They would like to have one functioning toilet if the Brandywine Conservancy would agree.

Mr. Bedwell brought up maintenance of the roof and Mrs. Adey confirmed it would be maintained properly.

Ms. Westerman asked what their plans are for the existing barn. Ms. Adey would like to eventually rehab the barn and has obtained a quote for that. However, that would be a future project as it is not currently in a state to be used as a four stall barn in today's standards. The question was asked as to whether the barn is considered an historic resource or whether it could be removed in the future. No answer is determined.

Ms. Marshall asked about the feasibility of the future in-law suite shown on the plans. This area is above the garage and is a possible future project.

Mr. Bedwell asked Mr. Kummer to draw up a realistic landscape plan showing replacements/additions to the existing plan, including the size and caliper of the replacement trees, should they be needed. This will be shared with Thornbury Township HC to potentially get a letter of blessing from them. Ms. Marshall asked if they could try to use native plants and show a pervious driveway surface around the existing trees to potentially help save them from any future damage. Mr. Kummer stated they planned to use native species.

Mr. Bedwell made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the 1301 Birmingham Road building and site plan with the following conditions as discussed during this meeting: additions and changes to the landscape portion of the plan to include replacement trees if existing trees die due to construction damage; addition of screening trees to site plan; and inclusion of previous driveway coverage around existing trees. Motion was seconded by Mr. Forbes. Motion passed unanimously.

Electronic Library Update

No new news at this time.

New Business

None

Mr. Bedwell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:27pm. Seconded by Mr. Forbes and voted unanimously. The next meeting will be February 23, 2015 at 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Boorse
HC Secretary