

**Historical Commission of Birmingham Township
Minutes of the meeting of October 26, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Birmingham Township Historical Committee was called to order by the Chairperson, Mike Forbes at **7:19pm** in the township building.

PRESENT: HC Members: Matt Bedwell, Kelly Fleming, Mike Forbes, John Ponticello

ABSENT: Pat Kelly

Others present: Amy O'Donnell and Nathaniel Holcomb

Ms. Fleming made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 28, 2021 meeting. Mr. Ponticello seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Historic Resource review of demolition applications for 1075 Creek Road, HR#70

Ms. O'Donnell, the owner, is in attendance this evening to present the damage that occurred on the property of Historic Resource #70. The property was under approximately 10 feet of water during hurricane Ida. The property contains the farm house (which is HR#70), two red barns (rumor is 1765), a white barn with a groom's apartment (late 19th century) and a Millhouse with an apartment (1760). The water damage to the property was extensive and the owners now have multiple projects before the township in order to recover from this flood. The projects are: (1) Gutting and redoing the interior of the groom's apartment located in the white barn as that structure suffered from approximately 2 feet of flood waters during the hurricane; (2) the Millhouse suffered from 9 feet of flood waters in the basement. Unfortunately, the utilities (electrical, septic, well, HVAC for the apartments and internet) for the entire property were located in that basement. So, now they plan to move all the utilities up off of the flood plain. As part of this project, the current wires for the utilities are housed on the Red Barn and will need to be moved onto two new utility poles that will be located on the property prior to the demolition of the barns.

The owner has confirmed that she sent the required 18 neighbor notifications on October 12th. All of the letters have been delivered and she has received 9 return receipts back. There are no neighbors in attendance this evening.

The two red barns are no longer structurally sound. Both barns have been viewed by the Township Zoning Officer and the Police Chief and were condemned. The owner also had a structural engineer inspect them and his report recommends demolition of both barns. The owner hopes to be able to salvage and reuse some of the barn beams and field stone on future projects on the property.

Discussion ensued about the various barn materials and how they can be reused. The owner has not been able to use these barns for storage due to the many recent floods that we have had and the fact that both barns are located directly on the flood plain. Therefore, they primarily use the white barn for their animals and storage of equipment such as their tractors. The flood waters come from both the Brandywine Creek and Radley Run during flash floods.

Mr. Forbes answered the questions on the required Form during the meeting for each of the structures.

Ms. Fleming wondered if there should be a discussion with others in the township about ways to potentially protect the Historical Resources that are located in flood plains. Mr. Bedwell noted that

there have been other Historical Resources that were lost along Creek Road over the years and it definitely warrants a conversation.

Mr. Forbes made a motion to recommend that the BOS approve the applications submitted for the property located at 1075 S. Creek Road, Historic Resource #70. This application involves the relocation of the utilities on the property from the Millhouse to another location not on the flood plain; the demolition of the Big Red Barn and the Little Bed barn (corn crib) and the future reuse of any salvageable barn beams and stone for other projects. Seconded by Mr. Bedwell and approved unanimously.

Update on the status of Battlefield Interpretation Plan

Mr. Forbes had a phone call with Kathleen McCaig who is the project manager for this undertaking. Mr. Forbes recommended that the agenda for the group's next meeting include Mary Sue Boyle and her plans for Linden Farms. The idea that this location could be an interpretation site or even the Heritage Center instead of the Dilworthtown center has been a recent development that has not been shared with the group. Since the plan is to turn the Linden Farm into a full-fledged museum, it would make logical sense to have this be the Heritage Center for Birmingham township. The fact that the actual battle began at this location is just another positive.

New Business

Mr. Ponticello indicated that he has noticed that the owner information on the working Historical Resource list for the group is not accurate. He wondered how this can be maintained in a more accurate manner. Mr. Forbes indicated that this has been an ongoing issue and that this is the reason that the HC would like the township office to be involved in this process too, since they are obviously notified when these properties are sold and the transfer tax is paid to the township. This is not information that the HC members are privy to. He is hopeful that the committee's recommendations from a year ago will be discussed at a BOS meeting very soon. An additional item that the Historic Commission would like to see implemented is a letter sent from the township notifying homeowners that they are living in an Historic Resource.

Mr. Forbes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:26pm. Seconded by Mr. Ponticello and voted unanimously. The next meeting will be November 23, 2021 at 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Boorse
HC Secretary