

**Historical Commission of Birmingham Township
Minutes of the meeting of March 28, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Birmingham Township Historical Committee was called to order by the Chairperson, Mike Forbes at **7:03pm** in the township building.

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

ABSENT: Kelly Fleming, Pat Kelly

Others present: Dan Hill, Erol and Raife Cebeci

Mr. Forbes made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 28, 2023 meeting. Mr. Ponticello seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Application for 1385 Birmingham Road (HR#33)

Mr. Cebeci acquired the property at 1385 Birmingham Road in 2011. They purchased the entire property to begin running their third Montessori preschool -- this was the third one. The front is used by students aged 18-36 months old. These students go outside to enjoy fresh air at least twice a day but need shade as they be may on the property from 7:30am to 5:30pm. They were using temporary umbrellas that only lasted one season, if that. Last year, they decided to have a pergola built by an Amish carpenter. They did not believe at the time that they needed a permit as the structure is just 250 square feet. They plan to cover the pergola with plants. However, they were cited for a couple of violations by the Zoning Officer. They have handled some of those already -- Zoning Hearing Board and HARB. They are here tonight as one of the violations is that the pergola is closer than the 200-foot minimum requirement from historic resource #33 -- the Dilworthtown Presbyterian Church. The pergola is in fact located 172 feet from the church building which is the Historic Resource. They are kindly requesting from the commission that the pergola be permitted to remain in place even though it is located less than the 200-foot minimum requirement in the ordinance.

Mr. Bedwell asked if the posts are installed into concrete footings? Mr Cebeci stated they are not, for safety purposes related to the students.

Mr. Forbes completed the required Historical Commission Form during the meeting.

The applicant sent the required notifications to all neighbors within 500 feet of the HR. They sent 27 notices out on 3/10/23. Thus far, they have received 17 returned receipts.

Mr. Forbes made a motion recommending that the BOS allow the pergola to remain as is on the property of Historic Resource #33. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ponticello and passed unanimously.

Sign Dedication at Birmingham Hill Update

Mr. Forbes stated that the final date that was selected for the sign dedication at Birmingham Hill is April 26th at 6:30pm. Invitations will be sent out this week.

Update from Mr. Forbes on County Historic Preservation Leadership Meeting

Mr. Forbes attended the luncheon at the county offices on Saturday, 3/25 and learned about two initiatives that the county is attempting to get township officials involved in. Mr. Forbes is planning to write a letter to the BOS with more details on each of the initiatives. They are:

1) The America 250th anniversary celebration – there is a chairperson that has been appointed for each county across the country. It is a national event since 2026 will be the 250th anniversary of the start of the United States of America. The Chester County chairperson is Beverly Shepard. There are four legs of this initiative - Planned events, Developmental activities, educational activities and specific planned events around historic sites (which clearly our area will be one). Mr. Forbes believes it behooves the township to be actively engaged in this process.

2) A Heritage tourism plan – for Chester County and the greater Philadelphia region. The Chester County piece is basically being coordinated on the same model as what the Conservancy put together for the Brandywine Battlefield Interpretation Plan. Again, Mr. Forbes stated that it would behoove the township to be actively engaged and involved so that we are aware of the overall coordinated tourism plan. They are planning to coordinate some initiatives with the American Revolution Museum in Philadelphia, Valley Forge, Longwood, and others in the region. Mr. Hill noted that this reminds him of the Scenic Byways project of a couple of years ago.

New Business

Mr. Forbes noted that he received an email from Quina indicating that the HC ordinance will not be reviewed at the April meeting as there are still some changes that are being made and they want to give the public some time to review and digest it before having it on the agenda. Mr. Forbes asked Mr. Hill what the process will be. Mr. Hill stated he isn't sure whether it needs to go back to the Birmingham township Planning Commission or the Chester County Planning Commission first.

Mr. Bedwell visited Ms. Kelly to give her a training session on the Google drive containing the Historic Resource information for Birmingham township. Mr. Bedwell thinks that a long-term plan needs to be developed. Mr. Forbes would like to get back to completing the background information on each of the Historic Resources. Mr. Bedwell noted that the Google drive is almost 10 years old and has been added to periodically during that time frame. It would be great to continue to add to it and utilize it as a township resource. Mr. Bedwell stated that google allows for 15 gigabytes for free, but if photos and more documents are added to our existing drive, it eventually may go over the allowed amount and we may need to start paying for some additional gigabytes. That would be a negligible amount but would need to be budgeted.

Mr. Forbes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40pm. Seconded by Mr. Ponticello and voted unanimously. The next meeting will be April 25, 2023 at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Boorse
HC Secretary