

Birmingham Historic Commission

Minutes

September 22, 2009

Commission Members present: Betty Organt, Ed Zaloga, Mark Gross, Lloyd Roach, Ed Zaloga, Will Snook.

Meeting commenced at 7:00 PM

Quorum was declared by Mr. Roach

There were no minutes from the previous meeting because of lack of quorum

Chairman Roach opened the meeting with a discussion to organize **The Historic Architectural and Landmark** inventory in the township.

Vice-Chairman Gross and Member Snook expressed dissatisfaction with the Chester County Architectural Inventory Form, which was used for the 1976 survey. After discussion the board agreed to the following method:

1. Mr. Roach will secure the forms or forms currently used by the Chester County Historic Preservation Network. Mr. Roach will call on Karen Marshall at Chester County Parks and Rec and secure a PDF version of the current forms used by the network. Member Snook will then examine the form and make changes necessary for use by the Birmingham Historic Commission. The commission agreed that making as much of this work digital and electronic as possible is best. The board agreed with this action.
2. Mr. Gross asked how many properties will be surveyed. It was generally agreed the amount would be fewer than sixty properties, including the monuments. It was also concluded by the board that the inventory will include digital color photographs.
3. There was considerable discussion concerning security, privacy and property owner issues. Mr. Roach will inquire of Karen Marshall about this issue as well. She may have some "tricks of the trade" to enable the homeowner contact to go more smoothly.

Chairman Roach asked the commission to agree to the selection of "Inventory Teams" to perform the actual inventory. The commission agreed on the following teams:

Team One: Lloyd Roach + Ed Zaloga

Team Two: Mark Gross + Betty Organt

Team Three: Will Snook & Scott Garrison

The commission also agreed to assign our intern, Sean Kennedy, duties as are needed at the time. Betty Organt is the intern supervisor.

There was considerable discussion among the board members of how we may determine who actually lives in the target inventory properties. Mr. Roach said he will ask the township secretary if the commission may obtain a reverse-address list so we may contact the property owners prior to examination. There was also discussion on whether a "Release" form may be necessary. Mr. Roach hopes to learn about these and other details of surveying during his meeting at the taskforce.

Vice-Chairman Gross reviewed the commission's visit to the Chester County Historical Society. Mr. Gross thanked the supervisors for authorizing the \$500 fee for the CCHS for 2009-2010. The commission thanked Ed Zaloga for forwarding photographs of our visit to the society.

Mr. Roach discussed the proposed 2009-2010 budget, which has been submitted to the supervisors for approval. Mr. Gross and Mr. Zaloga requested that an amount be included for the proposed re-print of the History of Birmingham Township book. Several members, including Mr. Snook suggested that pictures be included in the book. Mr. Zaloga suggested a companion CD be enclosed, which would contain key photographs of township historic structures. Mr. Roach will make the changes in the budget proposal and forward them to the township for approval.

The "Township Wall of History" was discussed by the commission. The main idea is to reproduce good photos of Birmingham sites and have them framed and placed on the wall of the township building's public spaces. Mr. Roach mentioned pictures taken by former Birmingham resident, Tom Marshall. Mr. Marshall lived here for over 50 years and took hundreds of photos, which are now being stored by the Chester County Historical Society. Mr. Roach also discussed the existence of Birmingham Park, which was located in the flood plain along Creek Road between Meetinghouse Road and the present Brandywine Nursery. Mr. Snook suggested a letter from the township supervisors to all township residents asking for copies of possible historic photos, which could be added to the inventory.

On September 3, 2009, Karen Marshall, Heritage Preservation Coordinator of the Chester County Parks and Recreation Department, joined Lloyd Roach and Mark Gross in the township building to familiarize the commission with the work of her department. Among her suggestion, were to become active with the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force, where Birmingham Township already has a seat. Mr. Roach plans to attend the next meeting held at the Chadds Ford Historical Society at 10:00 AM on October 1, 2009.

Per the request by the Board of Supervisors, the commission was asked if the group could use a recording secretary to record and draft the minutes for the meeting. The commission agreed unanimously on this request to provide the commission with a regular secretary who could record and draft minutes. (Mr. Gross has already left the meeting at 7:49 PM when this request was agreed upon.) Mr. Roach will convey this request to Township Secretary Nelling.

Before concluding the meeting, the remaining members discussed at-length the proposal to place "Historical Markers" on both the Sandy Hollow Trail and the new Birmingham Hill Trail. Mr. Snook, Mr. Roach and Mr. Zaloga suggested strongly that the educational component was encouraged. However, why not use modern technology of Smart Phones and iPHONES to provide the historical data. Mr. Snook suggest using a simple voice-mail system, where the walker can use their PDA or portable device and its GPS capability to describe where any battle action may have taken place on where they are standing.

The commission feels this idea has tremendous merit in that it accomplishes several goals:

1. Elimination of signage and the NIMBY issues they will create.
2. Elimination of maintenance costs
3. Because it is software defined, ease of information changes as necessary.
4. Increased interest and use by young people.

With no further business for the commission, Mr. Zaloga moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded and carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lloyd Bankson Roach
Acting Recording Secretary