

Historical Commission of Birmingham Township
Minutes of the meeting of May 24, 2016

The regular meeting of the Birmingham Township Historical Committee was called to order by Chairman Matt Bedwell at 7:15 pm in the township building.

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

ABSENT: Kate Marshall

Others present: Pratap Kesarkar, applicant/owner 1370 Old Wilmington Pike, West Chester, PA 19382

Mr. Bedwell made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 25, 2016 meeting. Motion seconded by Carla Westerman. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Conklin attended the meeting to encourage the Historic Commission to brainstorm some new ideas for historical preservation. Mr. Conklin has spoken with both Mr. Snook and Mr. Kegaris about the possibility of making a presentation to the BOS, HC, PC or possibly all of them together. The BOS is hoping to get recommendations from the HC, HARB and the special ordinance subcommittee about possible changes that could be made to make the township run more efficiently. In order to gather ideas and yet not start from scratch, they are looking at how other townships, boroughs, et cetera have set up their commissions. For instance, in West Chester Borough HARB and HC are one body. There are pros and cons to having it set up either way.

Discussion of the term “massing” ensued about whether it should be more finely defined than just in the guidelines. Mr. Conklin states that this is part of the entire process of reviewing the township ordinances.

1370 Old Wilmington Pike proposal for, HR#29

Mr. Kesarkar has recently purchased this house and hopes to make the proposed changes/additions to the house in order to be able to move in with his family before the start of the 2016/2017 school year. The previous owner has not occupied the home since 2010; it has been rented on and off during that the past 6 years. However, the home is in much disrepair. He has presented all of the changes that he would like to make on the house/property. However, he will be phasing the work in terms of what is a priority, especially since he is not sure what he will uncover as he begins the work on the property.

The applicant has proposed two options for replacing the current asbestos siding if it is determined that the existing siding is not able to be saved. If he is unable to save the current siding, he is proposing either Smart LP siding or Hardie board – depending on which product he can source more easily. He has also proposed two different options for the fence along the front of the property. This is primarily a safety issue as he has young children and the house is located very close to the road. Ms. Needham states that she is fine with all of his proposed changes/additions, however she would like to be kept in the loop with what decisions the applicant makes as he begins the renovation process.

Discussion ensues about the new porches that the applicant intends to build on the back of the house. He states he is still deciding what type of footing will make sense both financially and for any future addition that he may want to add in terms of a first floor bedroom for his in-laws when they visit. It was discussed that the applicant intends to use sono tube concrete forms for the rear balcony footings and wooden posts to support the balcony. The railings for the balcony will be in the same color scheme as the rest of the house. The HC review the rear balcony renderings and agreed they were appropriate for the house. Discussion progressed to the future addition he is contemplating to provide a first floor bedroom. Mr. Forbes noted that the applicant may need to consider a different footing option depending on the proposed addition at that time. No decision was rendered regarding the type of foundation for the future addition as the applicant would need to come back before the HC for that.

Mr. Bedwell states that if in the future the applicant decides he wants to build an addition or garage, he will need to come before the HC again with those plans. Also for future plans, it is recommended that they be scaled drawings.

Mr. Bedwell is completing the required HC form for this renovation. The completed form and the minutes will be sent to the BOS along with the recommendation letter approving the request for proposed changes. Mr. Bedwell made a motion to approve the applicant's request for the proposed changes/repairs to HR#29. Mr. Forbes seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Westerman notes that it would be nice to get updated photos of this HR for the website at this time since it is changing hands. Mr. Bedwell will ask the applicant to take some photos of the remodel process and what he potentially uncovers.

Update on the Subcommittee

Mr. Forbes indicates that there is no update from the subcommittee this month.

Electronic Library Update

Nothing new at this time.

New Business

None.

Mr. Forbes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:36m. Seconded by Ms. Needham and voted unanimously. The next meeting will be on June 28, 2016 at 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Boorse
HC Secretary