

Historical Commission of Birmingham Township
Minutes of the meeting of November 28, 2017

The regular meeting of the Birmingham Township Historical Committee was called to order by Chairman Carla Westerman at 7:20 pm in the township building.

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

ABSENT: Others present:

Ms. Westerman made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 24, 2017. Ms. Marshall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Since the last meeting, Nancy Needham has moved out of Birmingham township and she has thus resigned from the Historical Commission.

Discussion of Proposed Ordinance:

Per a discussion that Ms. Westerman had with Kristin Camp (township solicitor) there are three items that she wants to further address with the Committee tonight.

1. Ms. Camp has recommended that the definitions of "Class I, II and III Historic Resources" in Chapter 122-6 be deleted in Section 1. This deletion is recommended due to the fact that there is no national standard for these classifications and the definitions would be replaced by the proposed criteria in determining whether a Birmingham township resource is historical.
2. Section 2: the definition of Historical Significance shall be deleted. This in essence is related to the national register issue except for the fact that the HC has added including "vernacular structures and landscapes and we switched individual from distinction to components." Ms. Camp has asked to be able to mull this language over. Mr. Forbes provides an example of Birmingham Hill to support this. He indicates that the view scape is important to the battle, but not specifically one particular tree. Discussion ensued about whether the current language protecting more than just structures, sites and landscapes should be included. This language would include roadways, objects and districts. This reference was not included in the criteria but the Historical Commission thought it was better to be more inclusive in order to protect resources such as Sandy Hollow which aren't currently included in the Historic Resources survey.
3. Ms. Westerman had the current cultural resources map from the most recent Comprehensive Plan printed to reference for this meeting. In reviewing this map, it does appear to correspond to the current list of HR's in the township although not all of these HRs are still in existence. Ms. Camp recommended that if this map be accurately updated, reviewed and approved by the BOS to be included as an amended map. Discussion ensued about how to do this accurately because some of the Historic Resources are no longer in existence (ex. Bunny's Diner and the Dilworth House) but they are still on the list and the map. Mr. Forbes indicates that if it is decided to move forward with this, then this might be a good time to considering adding the three new HRs based on the most recent review of township data and the new Criteria. If this is decided then the HC should follow the Ordinance procedure to add new HR to the list. The procedure is located in Section 6.

Ms. Camp recommends that all aspects of this Ordinance adoption should be made at the same time in order to make it a total package rather than doing it piecemeal. Ms. Westerman is planning to discuss this with her further tomorrow.

Discussion ensues about the difference between landscapes and viewsapes. Viewsapes are not included in the language of the ordinance, however they are very important to the Historical Commission and they would like to find a place to include them.

Mr. Forbes notes that whatever language Ms. Camp believes will make it more defensible in court should be included in the proposed Ordinance changes.

Update on BOS presentation

Ms. Westerman notes that Ms. Camp is planning to attend the BOS meeting on December 4, 2017 to assist in explaining the proposed changes to this ordinance to the Supervisors.

New Business

Due to Ms. Westerman's resignation from the HC, the township needs a new person to receive the mailings from the Chester County Historic Preservation Network. This consists of the list of events within Chester County. Mr. Forbes has offered to receive these going forward.

The HC is not planning to have a meeting in December as the meeting date would be the day after Christmas.

Mr. Forbes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:24pm. Seconded by Ms. Marshall and voted unanimously. The next meeting will be January 23, 2018 at 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Boorse
HC Secretary