

~~DRAFT~~

**Historical Commission of Birmingham Township  
Minutes of the meeting of February 26, 2019**

The regular meeting of the Birmingham Township Historical Committee was called to order by Chairperson, Mike Forbes at **7:18 pm** in the township building.

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

ABSENT: Jeff Janofsky

Others present: Dan Hill, Sheila Fleming (Brandywine Conservancy)

Mr. Forbes made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 22, 2019. Ms. Fleming seconded the motion and it passed unanimously with one abstention from Matt Bedwell who was absent from the January meeting.

**Chester County Town Tours**

Mr. Bedwell discussed the 25th anniversary Town Tour that was introduced at the January meeting by Jeff Taylor. The event will be held at Radley Run Country Club on August 29, 2019. The theme is "Then and Now". It will consist of various stations with docents to lead the participants. The event will cover the history of the Painter family and the Mather family. It will be a kid-friendly event. They are in need of many volunteers to make this event a success. The event will be followed-up by a dinner at Radley Run Country Club.

Mr. Bedwell is going to be the contact person to the extent that he is needed. The biggest need at this point is for volunteers. The last time this event was held they had over 500 participants. They do expect to exceed this number this year as it's the 25th anniversary of the event.

**Review and Discussion of Vision Partnership Program for Brandywine Battlefield**

Mr. Forbes re-visited the concept of the Vision Partnership Program from the September meeting. When this Vision Partnership was presented to the Board of Supervisors in the Fall, they had some questions and asked for more specific details of what was expected of the lead municipality and how exactly the monies would be handled. This new proposal addresses those questions.

Ms. Sheila Fleming presented the Grant proposal for the Brandywine Battlefield National Historic Landmark Heritage Interpretation Plan.

There are now 7 municipalities and several non-profit organizations that will be invited to participate in this planning effort. The Chester County Planning Commission will most likely assign a project monitor to the effort in order to verify that the program meets the Landscapes III requirements.

Ms. Sheila Fleming referenced a map that shows the expanded area of the Battlefield area. This expanded area now includes areas of Pennsbury and Kennett.

There will be a steering committee that will be working with a consultant that specializes in Historic Interpretation. There will be Public Participation - public meetings and several information collecting efforts, key person interviews.

Mr. Ponticello asked what the end result will be? Ms. Fleming states It will be a document that will be an integrated story- telling of the Battle of the Brandywine at different sites - explaining what part that specific site played in the overall battle. The goal is consistency in the signage and in the storytelling throughout the area. This project will simply create the plan. Each municipality will then need to create the signage for the sites that are in their control.

Ms. Kelly Fleming asked why the Brandywine Conservancy is heading this up? Ms. Sheila Fleming states that for the past 20 years or so the Brandywine Conservancy has been involved in preserving many of the sites that are referenced in this grant proposal.

Mr. Bedwell asked if the ultimate document created from this will be for the townships or for the general public? Mr. Forbes stated that the plan will be an interpretative document of the battlefield for townships. The townships will have the ability to create signage or documents to provide to the public.

The Brandywine Conservancy can't directly apply for the Vision Partnership Program grant. The applicant must be a township or municipality. The Brandywine Conservancy will be involved and walk alongside the municipalities. She understands that Birmingham Township has limited resources in terms of staff to dedicate to such a project. There are other prospective partner municipalities that may have more staffing resources. However, because the majority of the sites and such are in Birmingham Township, they wanted to offer the lead role to them first. The lead municipality will be the one that signs the contract, issues the RFP (BC would ghost write this), and interview the candidates for the consultant role. The contact person for the lead municipality will also be the person who needs to approve the monthly invoices that come in from the consultant. This role will be approximately a 12-month commitment.

Ms. Kelly Fleming has a concern of what happens if the scope of the work proposed changes and becomes more extensive. When you have 7 hands in the pool - it seems like it could become an issue for the project manager or lead. She also asked if the grant of \$29,000 is the maximum grant that can be allowed and if it is guaranteed. Ms. Sheila Fleming doesn't have the answer to this and would need to research the maximum allowed. She also stated that in the RFP the amount of the money would be communicated to the consultant and once they know the budget, they can verify that it will be able to cover the scope without going over budget. She also indicated that the grant application is not guaranteed as they will receive multiple applications and only grant monies to the ones they approve.

The grant proposals are due in April so a decision will need to be made at the next BOS meeting if Birmingham Township wants to be involved and also if they want to be the lead municipality.

Discussion ensued about the resources needed to be the lead. The HC feels strongly that the township should be involved in the project because at least a third of the sites are located in Birmingham Township.

Mr. Bedwell made a recommendation that the BOS accept the Vision Partnership Program Grant Proposal Brandywine Battlefield National Historic Landmark Heritage Interpretation Plan as it is a worthwhile program for the local region and that it would be an important benefit that Birmingham Township take the lead on this program since a third of the sites are located in the township. The concern of administration is clearly an issue, but perhaps it could be handled via a committee of some HC members in conjunction with RPOS members to alleviate the burden to the township staff. The HC stated that based upon the revised proposal and the outline of how the monies will be handled, it would be a worthwhile expense of ultimately \$2000 for Birmingham Township to receive the document at the

end of the program. The initial outlay of monies would however be \$6,~~1,443~~. Of which \$4,~~143000~~ would be reimbursed from the grant. Motion seconded by Mr. Forbes and passed unanimously.

**New Business**

Mr. Forbes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:25pm. Seconded by Mr. Ponticello and voted unanimously. The next meeting will be March 26, 2019 at 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Boorse  
HC Secretary