

**Historical Commission of Birmingham Township  
Minutes of the meeting of August 25, 2020**

The regular meeting of the Birmingham Township Historical Committee was called to order by Chairperson, Mike Forbes at **7:27pm** via Zoom.

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

ABSENT:

Others present: Dan Hill, Karen Marshall

Mr. Forbes made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 28, 2020 meeting. Mr. Ponticello seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**Discussion of Status of Battlefield Interpretation Plan (Vision Partnership Landmark Connectivity Plan)  
– Karen Marshall**

Ms. Karen Marshall is in attendance tonight sharing the most recent task force meeting assignment. At the presentation of the VPLCP, each participating township was provided a packet to walk them through their portion of the plan – there is a draft list of goals and objectives that the HC needs to review and report back to the Conservancy with recommendations. The recommendations from the committees will relate to five goal areas:

1. The overall plan is to build a multi-municipal plan between the seven participating municipalities that includes heritage interpretation and plan for additional heritage amenities;
2. Recommendations for areas in which to expand heritage interpretation and battlefield education opportunities;
3. Recommendations of areas or resources that are identified for protection and study;
4. Recommendations for bicycle, pedestrian and watercraft connectivity options;
5. Identify tools that can enhance the visitor experience.

Mr. Forbes asked for some clarification on where we are in the process – due to Covid-19, he believes that perhaps there has been a lack of thorough communication about what steps have been completed and what is the exact timeframe for the next steps.

Ms. Marshall is here tonight to discuss the Brandywine Battlefield Preservation Plan and proposed locations of each of the Heritage Centers. She wanted to meet with the entire HC tonight to discuss the two potential sites identified for Birmingham and Thornbury – the proposed options are: the log cabin at Birmingham Hill, Randall Spackman's farm, the Cheyney Farm and the Dilworth Farm. Ms. Fleming attended the presentation by the Brandywine Conservancy for the proposed site at the Birmingham Hill Log House at the Odell Farm. At this meeting they discussed how this Heritage Center would be accessed without too much traffic on the smaller roads – specifically Meetinghouse Road. The committee needs to recommend where they want the landmark heritage center. Ms. Marshall notes that it would be very beneficial to have a Heritage Center located in a place where actual action occurred during the battle.

Thornbury Township is recommending that Birmingham Hill be the Heritage Center (just a step above the interpretative signs where people can gather more information about the 35,000-acre battlefield

area) and that Randall Spackman's Farm be the Interpretative Center with a direct link to the Heritage Center. Ms. Marshall suggested that the HC make a recommendation that: All future planning/proposals based on this plan must coordinate with the Brandywine Battlefield Taskforce and the Brandywine Battlefield Park Associates – she believes that this wording will allow the various Historical Commissions to stay intimately involved in any future decisions made by the Vision Partnership Plan. She also indicated that the Brandywine Battlefield Park Associates (the non-profit side of the PHMC) are volunteers that are very excited to be participants in helping the public better understand the battlefield. Andrew Outten is the contact person for this organization and the education coordinator for the Brandywine Battlefield Park.

Ms. Marshall also noted that the Historical Marker interpretative signage should be tied in with this project (they are currently planned for Osborne Hill, Spackman Farm and the 1704 House) – the possibly proposed site for this project is at the Birmingham Hill location. Andrew Outten is waiting for a decision so that he can draw up the wording for the sign.

Additional decisions that will need to be made are additional historic interpretive sites for a potential driving tour; hours for the Heritage Center to be open; parking and access roads to be used for the proposed Heritage Center; and a location for the interpretative sign.

Mr. Forbes is going to reach out to Jeannine Spiers for guidance. Ms. Fleming has already notified Kathleen McCaig that the HC was meeting tonight and indicated that she would follow-up with timing for a recommendation.

After extensive discussion, it seems that some clarification is needed to verify the scope of the project and the timeframes for each step of the plan. Mr. Hill is going to reach out to the township solicitor and verify that it is acceptable to have a zoom work session with the applicable persons (BOS representative, PC representative and the HC members) to move forward with the decisions that are needed by the overall Task Force.

### **New Business**

Mr. Forbes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:43pm. Seconded by Mr. Bedwell and voted unanimously. The next meeting will be September 22, 2020 at 7:15pm (via Zoom).

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Boorse  
HC Secretary