

Historical Commission of Birmingham Township
Minutes of the meeting of June 22, 2021

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

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

ABSENT: Kelly Fleming

Others present:

Mr. Forbes made a motion to approve the amended minutes from the May 25, 2021 meeting. Mr. Ponticello seconded the motion and it passed unanimously (one abstention Matt Bedwell who was not at the May meeting).

Discussion on the Dilworthtown Heritage Center

Mr. Forbes wants to make sure that everyone is beginning to think about ideas for staffing the Heritage Center that is proposed for the Dilworthtown Center. The house where the Heritage Center would be located is HR#31 located at 1395 Birmingham Road. There was some discussion about what makes HR#31 a historic resource. The new owners of the Dilworthtown Inn and adjacent buildings are willing to make that building (at least the first floor of the building) accessible and able to be used as a Heritage Center for this project. This concept is in the early stages - there will be many obstacles that need to be addressed as the project moves forward. Some of the items that will need to be addressed are renovations that will need to be made to the building to make it ADA compliant, parking, and the issues of staffing or how to get volunteers, there will clearly be additional items that will arise as the project moves forward. As this project moves along, decisions will need to be made about whether to apply for grants to fund various aspects of the project – not just upfront costs, but also ongoing funds needed for materials, electricity, et cetera.

Mr. Forbes foresees that there are a couple of differences between the proposed Heritage Center at Dilworthtown and the current one at Marshallton – the biggest being the size of the building and secondly, the proposed center will probably be a location where people would stop before visiting the battlefield sites and locations referenced as part of this multi-municipal project. This is new territory for the Historic Commission since up to this point, there hasn't been an on-going annual budget that needed to be managed by the group.

Mr. Bedwell has offered to reach out to Linda Kaat for guidance as to how they set up the Marshallton Heritage Center. Mr. Bedwell said that the first step is determining what the specific vision is for the location. Mr. Forbes said the location will have a dual focus - the battle facts of the area (reflecting and educating people on the strategic retreat and the final engagement of the battle beyond the 1704 house) and also the history of Birmingham Township - the agrarian history of this area and the influence of the Friends on this area.

Ms. Kelly asked what the details of the arrangement would be with the owners? Mr. Forbes stated that he is not certain at this time - in fact, he has not even seen the building because of Covid. His next step is to reach out to the owner and plan an in-person meeting at the house. Mr. Bedwell stated that this is a different scenario than the Heritage Center at the Marshallton Inn and it would be nice to be able to have the Historic Commission members see the building in order to determine the scope of the needs.

The “to do” items from this meeting are: Mike Forbes to arrange a meeting with the new owners and Matt Bedwell is going to reach out to Linda Kaat about the steps they took in setting up the Heritage Center at Marshallton.

New Business

None.

Mr. Forbes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:59pm. Seconded by Mr. Bedwell and voted unanimously. The next meeting will be July 27, 2021 at 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Boorse
HC Secretary