

Historical Commission of Birmingham Township
Minutes of the meeting of January 24, 2023

The regular meeting of the Birmingham Township Historical Committee was called to order by Chairperson, Mike Forbes at **7:13pm** in the township building.

PRESENT: HC Members: Kelly Fleming, Mike Forbes, Patricia Kelly, John Ponticello

ABSENT: Matt Bedwell

Others present: Dan Hill

Mr. Forbes made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 22, 2022 meeting. Mr. Ponticello seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Reorganization of Committee for 2023

Ms. Boorse opened discussion for new officers for this calendar year. Ms. Fleming asked if he still wants to be chairperson. He noted that he would like to see the Battlefield Interpretation Plan through to completion and it looks like that may happen this year. He also noted that perhaps next year, someone else should think about stepping up to be chairperson. Ms. Fleming nominated Mr. Forbes as Chairperson for 2023; seconded by Mr. Ponticello and passed unanimously.

Mr. Forbes opened the floor for discussion for the Vice Chairperson position. Mr. Forbes nominated Ms. Fleming again for 2023. Nomination was seconded by Mr. Ponticello and it passed unanimously.

VPP Final Grant Approval Recommendation to the BOS

Mr. Forbes noted that he had received all the approval letters from the township/municipalities that are part of the VPP grant, Jeanine has summarized and forwarded the Chester County approval of the plan. The next step is to have the Birmingham Township Board of Supervisors approve the plan. Once the BOS votes and accepts the VPP as presented; that acceptance letter from Birmingham township will trigger the payments to the Brandywine Conservancy and thus reimbursement to Birmingham township for all but the original amount that was to be covered by Birmingham township which was \$2,000. (Per Mr. Forbes, on December 6, 2022 the CCPC sent a letter to Quina with their acceptance and noted that the plan is consistent with the proposed goals. The original project with proposed and approved in May of 2019 and the contributions from each township was \$2,000. Birmingham township fronted the full amount of the cost and then will be reimbursed through this mechanism).

Mr. Forbes made a motion recommending that the BOS accept the final Vision Partnership Plan as presented and outlined by the Chester County Planning Commission. Seconded by Ms. Fleming and passed unanimously.

2023 Historic Commission Plans

Mr. Forbes has two projects that he thinks the committee members should work on in 2023.

The first is to create an information sheet of places where owners of Historic Resources can use as a resource to find grant monies or information on PHMC (Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission). Mr. Forbes notes that between the state, federal government and third party non-profit organizations, many offer support for historic properties – and it seems that many of the owners of historic properties are not aware of these resources. Mr. Hill stated that Stephanie Armpriester at Brandywine

Conservancy would be a good person to reach out to about this information. Ms. Kelly is willing to take the lead on this as long as Mr. Forbes gives her some initial contacts to reach out to.

Secondly, he thinks it's important to get the google drive information regarding the Historic resources within Birmingham Township from Mr. Bedwell, in order to make it more accessible to the HC members and also to the township office staff. Ms. Fleming noted that the drive consists of the comprehensive list of all of the historic resources and their classifications; additionally there is an individual folder for each historic resource with photos and detailed information on them. Some of the folders are much more detailed than others – but it is a good resource. Ms. Fleming wants to grant access to the township office. She noted that it is a simple grant to give people access and it yet the ability to make changes can still stay with the Historic Commission. Mr. Hill stated that a searchable database would ideal. Discussion continued about the office having access to the spreadsheet that was finalized as part of the proposed ordinance changes last year. Mr. Forbes noted that it would be helpful to have the township office assist in maintaining the integrity of the owners information on that spreadsheet. Since they have access to when properties are sold, they could share that information with the HC in order to update the owner information on the spreadsheet. Ms. Fleming is willing to look through the past couple of years of HC applications and piece together who the current owners are, in order to update the information on the current spreadsheet.

Ms. Fleming hopes to have the ordinance finalized and create a checklist of what the actual step process is for when an HR owner is looking to make changes. Then she would like to send a letter to all of the current owners of historic resources within the township with that checklist, so they are aware of their responsibilities if they want to make changes or renovations to their homes. Once the list of resources is compiled, that could be included in this mailing. It would be a "So you own an historic resource...here is a packet of information for your reference... and would include the checklist of steps to be taken if they want to make changes to their home and also the list of resources they can access for ideas and possible grants'. Ms. Fleming said this information could also be added to the township website.

Ms. Fleming noted the need to plan the sign dedication for the new sign at Birmingham Hill in April. The date that is being proposed is April 15, 2023. Mr. Forbes stated he forwarded information from Jeannine to Ms. Fleming on the previous sign dedication – the invitation list and the actual invitation can be used as templates so that no one is reinventing the wheel. Ms. Fleming is going to draft an email to sent to Mr. Forbes in order to make sure that the date works for the important people who need to attend the dedication.

Ms. Kelly said that Radley Run had contacted her about getting a sign for the Mansion House to give some brief history of the house. They have recently received approval to be on the National Registry list and want to note information about the history of the property on a sign. Mr. Forbes noted that he is not aware of any of that type of signage. Mr. Hill said they should contact the Chester County Historic Society about signage for National Registry homes. He also noted that they should start with the Radley Run HOA as they may have guidelines for signage within the Radley Run Community. Ms. Fleming also stated that the township has ordinance information about signs within the township that they would need to comply with.

New Business

Mr. Forbes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:13pm. Seconded by Ms. Kelly and voted unanimously. The next meeting will be February 28, 2023 at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Boorse
HC Secretary