

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

The regular meeting of the Birmingham Township Historical Committee was called to order by the Vice Chairperson, Kelly Fleming at **7:00pm** in the township building.

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

ABSENT: Matt Bedwell

Others present: Bryan Rogers

Ms. Kelly made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 26, 2023 meeting. Mr. Ponticello seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Review Application for 225 Brintons Bridge Road (HR#36)

Bryan Rogers, the tenant for the property is in attendance this evening to propose a Colonial Inn – breakfast and lunch location at the location referenced above. He is a resident of West Chester and in 2018 opened a food truck business that has been serving Chester, Delaware and Lancaster counties and festivals, local breweries and such. His food truck business is Turks Head Sauce. They (he and his wife) decided they would like to open a breakfast/lunch restaurant. Earlier this year they met Frank Rupp and looked at this location for their new venture.

Mr. Rogers is proposing a breakfast and lunch restaurant at this location to be open Tuesday through Sunday. Operating hours would be 7am to 3pm. The proposed name is Rooney's at Dilworthtown.

The only exterior change being proposed is to add an exhaust hood vent on the rear of the house. He showed renditions of what it will look like from the HARB meeting last week. They will also be installing three make-up air condenser units outside at ground-level that will vent into the entire first floor. These will replace the air that is removed via the exhaust hood. They are using three units, as one large unit will not fit into the basement and it would be too heavy to be placed on the roof. The interior upgrades will be installing new plumbing, new electrical and the new ADA bathroom.

Ms. Kelly asked what the seating capacity of the restaurant will be. Mr. Rogers indicated the Fire Marshall will make the final determination -but they are estimating about 24 two top tables – thus roughly 48-50 seats.

He showed the plans of the proposed first floor layout including the required ADA bathroom which will also need to be installed. There is hardwood floor throughout the first floor, however they can not have hardwood floor in a commercial kitchen, so that flooring will be removed and used to fix damaged boards in the proposed dinning areas. The new kitchen floor will be tile as required in any commercial kitchen. He also noted that in summer months, they would like to have a couple of outdoor tables on the patio.

It is a five-year lease with additional renewals in five-year increments for a maximum of 15 years. His lease is only for the first floor and basement. He currently does not have an option to lease the second floor, however, he could foresee hosting bridal or baby showers up there in the future.

Mr. Forbes reviewed the required form in the meeting. The applicant also provided the list of neighbors who were notified of the proposed plan and this meeting tonight. Sixteen neighbors were notified, and none are in attendance this evening.

Mr. Forbes made a motion recommending that the BOS approve the proposed modifications outlined in the application for 225 Brintons Bridge Road (HR#36). Motioned seconded by Ms. Fleming and approved unanimously.

Review and Comment on BOS Proposal for Historic Preservation Ordinance for 11/6/23 Meeting

Mr. Forbes provided a summary of the five issues that the Historical Commission members have with the current wording/terms in the proposed Historic Ordinance. Please see them listed below.

The Birmingham township Historical Commission has reviewed the proposed ordinance revisions for the Historic Preservation ordinance. Since the HC has previously provided this identical feedback before, we are summarizing our feedback and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

1. The minimum setback for the new development from historic properties should remain at 200 feet from the historic resource. Doubling the existing minimum setback does not sufficiently protect the historic properties from encroaching development.
2. The ordinance should include the requirement that landscaping and screening plans of new development within 500 feet of historic properties be reviewed by the HC to help protect those historic resources.
3. The definition of "Site" should be altered to match the National Register definition as suggested by the Chester County Planning Commission in their review letter dated 4/1/2021. That definition is "the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archaeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure."
4. The definition of "Demolition of a Historic Resource" should be altered to "Demolition in whole or in part of a Historic Resource."
5. Do not alter the role of the Historical Commission in reviewing modifications to Historic Resources, a role that is consistently applied to Historical Commissions throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Chester County.

Mr. Forbes made a motion to recommend that the BOS consider and incorporate these additions into their final revision of the Historic Preservation ordinance. Seconded by Ms. Fleming and approved unanimously.

New Business

Ms. Fleming created the google form for the office to complete to provide any updates to ownership of historic resources within the township. However, she would like to review the process that will be followed for these updates with the entire committee before communicating it to the office. She will send the form to everyone for their review this month and the process will be on the agenda to finalize next month.

Mr. Forbes stated that the public meeting to discuss the revised HC ordinance will be November 6, 2023 and it would be good for the HC members to plan to attend that BOS meeting.

Mr. Forbes indicated that the December HC meeting will be cancelled since it is the day after Christmas.

Mr. Forbes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45pm. Seconded by Ms. Fleming and voted unanimously. The next meeting will be November 28, 2023 at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Boorse
HC Secretary