

Morris Township Historic Preservation Commission Minutes, Tuesday, January 24, 2017

Judith Sacks-Bliss called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Attendance: Carol was present via phone. Judith conducted the meeting. Craig Goss and Sue Young were present as were guests Rick Watson, Morris Museum Trustee, and Tim Quinn, Morris Twp. Administrator.

Our new member, Erich Huhn was sworn in. He is currently on the Morristown Preservation Committee as well and will be a great knowledgeable asset to our Commission. Welcome, Erich.

Selection of the 2017 officers: Motions were made and carried. Carol Barkin will continue as Chairperson, Jean Rich as Vice Chair and Sue Young as Secretary. A thank you to all.

Morris Museum: Rick Watson, a trustee for the Morris Museum, came to our meeting asking for help and understanding about the register status of the museum. Is it part of the Normandy Historic District. The Trustees are seeking funding from the Morris County Historic Preservation Trust and were denied eligibility for a grant to renovate the Museum's roof. We need to clarify the history of its eligibility.

The Museum trustees applied for a grant September 26, 2015 and received \$22,904 for creation of a Preservation Plan. This document is necessary to complete before any other applications for grants are applied and accepted. The Museum does have a Preservation Plan that was done by Connelly and Hickey, historic consultants. The Preservation Plan would outline not only the history of the Museum, but give guidelines for future renovations that would be needed. Rick should get a copy of the Preservation Plan and talk to the Connelly people about options and getting their help before re-applying for a grant. Carol and Judith both indicated that the Normandy Historic District has a COE (Certificate of Eligibility) to expand the boundaries of the District and might include the Museum. Carol and Judith will follow up with Rick.

Old Business:

Isaac Pierson House demolition: The HPC expressed its displeasure that the Commission was not notified prior to the demolition of this historic house. We are updating our Historic Plan and could have at least taken pictures of the house and its historic characteristics before it was demolished. We ask the Twp. Engineering or legal department to inform our Commission when a demolition permit for the demolition of any house or building is being applied.

A note: Mt. Lakes has delayed the demolition of some of their Hapgood homes that have given Mt. Lakes its most outstanding characteristic.

Colgate/Mennen Property: What is being proposed? Wanted to remind Tim that the back gates and wall are historic and we would like to preserve them. Perhaps a sign can be created and displayed depicting the polo grounds and other Whippany River club history for people to see.

Whitehead Road-South Bridge: Carol has written a letter to the Historic Sites Council to be forwarded by our mayor. The Historic Sites Council meeting is scheduled in Trenton for February 15th, 2017 at 10 am. Sue Young will be attending the meeting and will report the results back to the Commission.

122 Mt. Kemble Avenue developers are going before the Board of Adjustment to get approval to build 8 condo units where the old brick house is located. We are concerned because the façade on the house was most likely built with brick from the Prudden Brick Company, but is outside of the Pruddentown official Historic District. We will meet with the developer rr: preserving the façade and/or the bricks.

MUUF: On September 27, 2016 the neighbors filed a lawsuit to stop the violation of an 1891 covenant that protects the neighborhood from non-residential construction on that property.

New Business:

Feasibility of a Demolition Ordinance. Would this be a possibility? At least this Commission should be made aware of all properties that may be in jeopardy of demolition in the future. We lost possible access to the Isaac Pierson house and were not able to record a visual history before it was demolished. Resident Lee Dowdy has some photographs of the house that can be accessed. The house was not officially on the NJ State Register, but had an opinion on file with SHPO.

Old Post Office: Tim Quinn asked about the Old Post Office building at Convent Station and whether it was on the Historic Registries. It is located at mile post 126, exceeds 50 years old and is disintegrating inside and out. It has become a safety hazard. What can be done, how can it be utilized? Is it beyond repair? Members of the HPC will do a site visit on February 1st at 11 am at the Post Office to check the inside and outside of the building, continue with research and get back to Tim Quinn with recommendations.

Expansion of Trinity Hall at Delbarton. Sue studied the plans with Jim Slate and went to see the location. The expansion will not be visible from Mendham Road and the location and project seems to be a good extension and use of the existing building and property, especially the outdoor amphitheater that will overlook the Valley.

88 Martin Luther King Avenue: is a vacant lot. Located mostly in Morristown, there are plans to build an 8 unit affordable housing unit for a homeless solution. No opposition was recorded at this time. We would like to see the plans.

Judith is working diligently on the new spreadsheet for the Historic Preservation Section of the new Township Master Plan. The spreadsheet will include the address, block# and Lot#, so it will be easier by all to locate the properties. Information about the sale or demolition will also be posted. Another goal is to create a visual directory of township historic properties that can be periodically updated by the HPC.

Meeting dates were discussed and approved. The meetings will be on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm,

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, February 28th at 7:30pm.
Our meeting was adjourned at 8:48 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue Young
Secretary