



Springfield Township Historical Commission

March 7, 2023

MINUTES OF MEETING OF REGULAR MEETING

HC-29

Meeting held in the Conference Room at Springfield Township Building 1510 Paper Mill Road, Wyndmoor, PA 19038

NOTICE: The Historical Commission of Springfield Township is an advisory board appointed by the Board of Commissioners. The actions of the Historical Commission on any agenda items does not reflect a final decision. The Board of Commissioners must render the final decision on any agenda items

MEETING ATTENDEES			
Name:		Name:	
Matthew Harris	Commission Chair	Heather Snyder-Killinger	Commission Member
David Sands	Commission Vice Chair		
Al Comly	Commission Secretary	Mark Penecale	Staff Liaison

Not in Attendance: Baird Standish, Joseph Devine

Guests: None

- 1) **Call by Order by the Chairperson** **Called to order at 6:07 PM by Chair Matthew Harris. Roll was taken and absentees noted.**
- 2) **Approval of Minutes** **Meeting HC-28 (February 7, 2023) Motion David Sands, seconded by Heather Killinger to approve with corrections. Approved on voice vote. Mr. Penecale made the corrections**
- 3) **Update by Board of Commissioners' Liaison:** **Commissioners were not represented at the meeting.**

Mr. Penecale summarized the current planning & zoning activities as follows:

- The last Planning Commission meeting was cancelled since there were no projects to be reviewed or acted upon.
- Nothing new to report on replacement commission member to fill the position formerly held by Scott Kreilick
- 902 E Pleasant Ave Subdivision/ Land Development that does not appear to have any historical implications.
- 1108-1110 Willow Grove Ave. 12 town houses on former church site. Zoning Hearing Board and Sketch plan are complete. Former Rectory to be demolished. Advisory group has been formed to consider re-use of rec center. Project does not appear to be of interest to Historical Society.

4) Review of Agenda

Mr. Penecale reported that there were no changes in status relative to Knipe (Willow Grove Ave) or Wild (Manor Road).

5) Discussion Items and Appropriate Action (“Previous Business” and “New Business” in earlier minutes).

HC-29.1 The majority of the meeting as a discussion of next steps, focusing on a memo generated by Mr. Comly prior to the meeting (copy attached). See Item 26.1 for update. This item will be the primary discussion item in defining the Commission’s role and objectives.

HC-29.2 Mr. Harris noted that the PHMC criteria form was not readily available in a useable format. It was agreed that this was really one component of the larger discussion regarding the development of a list of properties important to the Township.

HC-28.1 There was a query from the Historical Society regarding a building at Stenton and Evergreen that was designed by Frank Furness. This will be investigated.

March 7, 2023 Update: Copies from Frank Furness,, the Complete Works, Revised Edition 1996, by George E. Thomas, Jeffrey A. Cohen & Michael J. Lewis attached to these minutes. Discussion followed noting that the ordinance does not provide a mechanism for addressing this issue.

HC-28.2 Mr Penecale had drafted and circulated the letter to the Commissioners regarding the implementation of an initial list. It was reported by Commissioner Ratsavong that this has not been addressed as yet by the Commissioners.

March 7, 2023 Update: Nothing to report

HC-27.1 Mr Penecale reported on his contact with Ms. Wild at 308 Manor Road. Particulars of the property:

- o 5.8 Acres 400 foot frontage on Manor Road, main house & carriage house

- Currently zoned for multi-use residential
- House is circa 1780. It was moved from Ridge Pike—date not known
- Ms. Wild does not want to subdivide the property

Mr. Penecale will send out a copy of the ordinance and other information along with an invitation to attend a Commission Meeting.

February 7, 2023 Update: Nothing to report.

March 7, 2023 Update: Nothing to report.

HC-26.1 The Commission renewed its discussion of the path forward for the Commission and the preparation of a list of Historic Properties in the Township. Summary points of that discussion included:

- The Township Comprehensive Plan included 28 properties of historic significance to the Township. Previously, these properties had been presented as a list for protection in the township, but the process was informally rejected by the Township Commissioners, noting that several are already owned by the Township and 2 are already on the National Register of Historic Places. The Commission requested that Mr. Penecale draft a letter to the Board of Commissioners to again request that these properties noted in the Comprehensive Plan be recognized as the initial township list of protected properties.
- The Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) is currently being reviewed (last done in the 1990s). It might be possible to include Historic Commission review in the SALDO process as part of the review and comment process for the Planning Commission. This is already done for first responders (STEMS) and Shade Tree Commission.
- The matter of Conservation Easements was discussed. The Chestnut Hill Conservancy does assist owners with easements, including some in Springfield Township. There is no capability in the Township to do Conservation Easements.
- Formalize a process to accept properties for the township list. The PHMC (Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission) might provide some excellent guidance in this regard.

January 3, 2023 Update: The PHMC (Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission) short form was discussed as a guideline for properties to be placed on the Township List. Mr. Harris will try to get a copy for discussion next month.

The intention is to have some information for each property on the Township list. It could be whatever is in the public domain or whatever could be provided by the property owner. It is not intended to be extensive. Springfield Township Historical Society might be one resource to this information.

February 7, 2023 Update: Discussion focused on the development of a "Watch List" of structures thought to be important. This might be a role filled by a third party professional. To do so will still necessitate the development of an initial scope

of work. That could be as simple as structures built 1920 or before, with photos, addresses and a site map (Google Earth or something similar). We could then consider what other information would be important and how that would be provided: Use Data, Historical Use, current use, building materials and style, construction date, would be examples of base information for a file.

March 7, 2023 Update: The Commission discussed how best to move forward and to provide the historic property advocacy that the Commission believes was intended when the ordinance was passed and Commission formed, noting:

- **Agreement on the Objectives noted in the Comly memo.**
- **Agreement that identifying structures to be considered was really the next action to undertake. Discussion will continue as to how best to do this—either hiring a professional firm (assuming the funds are available) to create this inventory or self-preparing a list. Commissioner Killinger offered to distribute her list that she got from Cindy Hamilton of the Historical Society as a starting point.**
- **Consideration will be given to reviewing the previous “scope document” that had been prepared as a potential RFP to retain a third party professional.**
- **It was also noted that many of the benefits in the ordinance are more useful to residential properties than commercially zoned sites. While this may be true, there was agreement that identifying the properties should precede any consideration of changes to the ordinance to encourage retention of historic structures.**

HC-25.1 The Knipe’s presented their property at 1001 Willow Grove Ave. The property is 100 x 200 in the middle of the commercial area in Wyndmoor. The house was built ca 1870. Mrs. Knipe stated that she has been in the residence since 1939. The Knipes are interesting if protecting the property from future development.

The commission provided a summary of the Historic Ordinance and the intentions of the Commission. Listing on the Township list is currently by owner's request only. It was suggested that the next step was for the Knipes to send a letter to the Commission stating their intention to have the property placed on the Township list and protect it from development. This would trigger a review by the Commission. A site visit was recommended and will be scheduled in the near future.

Update 12/6/2022 The Commission discussed the process forward for the Knipe property. After some discussion, it was agreed to communicate with the Knipe family, requesting the following:

- A formal request from the Knipe family to enter the process with the Township. Mr. Penecale will draft that request and work with the Knipe's in this regard.
- Forward a copy of the current ordinance to the Knipe's. Mr' Penecale will include this in his communication with the Knipe's

January 3, 2023 Update: Knipe family still interested. Mr Penecale to follow up

February 7, 2023 Update: A brief discussion followed regarding this matter, with the primary item being the document or form to be used for acceptance and what should be included. This resulted in several items:

- Need to generate necessary components for such a file
- What conditions might need to be necessary for acceptance on “the list”
- Does it matter why the property owner wishes to be on “the list”—retain the structure, or simply prevent future subdivision or development of site? Is the answer to this question pertinent to our mission.

March 7, 2023 Update: Discussion to be folded into the larger discussion regarding the development of a list

- 6) **Citizen Comments** *None*
- 7) **Assignment of Member Action Items**
 - **Follow-up with the Knipe and Wild. Mr Penecale**
 - **Copy of available listing of properties—Ms. Killinger**
- 8) **Agenda for next meeting** *All new agenda items shall be forwarded to Mr. Penecale at least one week prior to scheduled meeting date*
- 9) **Adjournment** Adjournment at 7:02 PM. Next meeting will be **April 4, 2023** at 6 PM to continue the discussion on the best means to move forward.

Respectfully Submitted

Albert M. Comly, Jr., AIA
Secretary

Attachments

Thoughts on the historic preservation process in Springfield

Objectives

- 1 retain structures that are distinctive and contribute to the character of the community
- 2 identify those structures
- 3 determine recommendations for retention of these structures—including how to incorporate this process in the current SALDO procedure

Note: I believe the current ordinance is creating difficulties because it avoids the process of identifying contributing structures—it relies on property owners to self-identify to access certain incentives. By re-stating the objectives, this might serve as an outline to revise the ordinance.

Actions:

Identify Structures

- Scenario 1 retain a professional to identify structures that should be considered. This would essentially be done as a windshield survey. This would basically involve the professional touring the Township and recording those buildings that should be considered. Since important local event knowledge may not be available for the professional, we would prioritize simply the visual aspects
- Scenario 2 historic commission develops a list of structures that it deems important based on age, style, designer, notable events. We then engage a professional to survey the Township using that information as the initial basis for their review. They could make recommendations to add or subtract as they see fit.

At the end of either scenario, we would have a list of what we think is important. We could then address the Commissioners as to that list and what we think the Township should do.

Our list (if we did one to start)

- Prepare files on structures on the delineated properties list (remembering this delineation at this time would have no legal standing for those concerned about uncompensated taking)
- To develop this list, we could retain professional assistance, as well as other available resources (Historical Society for one). These files would consist of:
 - Property description (essentially an address, lot size, owner)
 - Age of structure
 - Street Photograph, or front elevation photograph
 - Reason for consideration: style, construction, designer, event, etc)

Going Forward

- Recommend to the Commissioners that this list be distributed to Building & Zoning.
- Get legal advice as to how to make the public aware of this list
- Consider how to incorporate the incentives—it might still be that owners would have to “opt in” to avail themselves of the incentives, but this would put the other structures “on the table” for discussion when a development was proposed.