

## MEETING MINUTES

### REGULAR MEETING OF THE HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION TUESDAY FEBRUARY 17, 2009

A regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held at the Hopewell Township Municipal Building auditorium on February 17, 2009 in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Chair Max Hayden called the meeting to order at 7:40pm.

Commission members present: David Blackwell, Pam Crabtree, Max Hayden, Erika Kotite & Moira Lawrence.

Committee Representative: Mayor Sandom (excused 10:05pm)

Township Administration Representative: Robert Miller, Zoning Office & Paul Pogorzelski, Township Administrator/Engineer (excused 9:50pm)

Recording Secretary: Deborah Rishko

Members of the Public: Richard Brown, Jill Kosek & Mr. McIlhinny

#### **Minutes for Approval**

The minutes of the January meeting were approved.

#### ***Certificate of Appropriateness Preliminary Review***

Mr. Richard Brown introduced himself as the architect hired by the Koseks to design the addition to the Smith/Hunt/Hill farmhouse. Ms. Kosek explained that she and her husband searched for six years for a farm for their horse breeding and selling and that they fell in love with the Smith/Hunt/Hill farm when it was not on the market and felt very fortunate to have the opportunity be stewards of such a unique property. She summarized the plans for the addition stating that a wood frame addition to the original house would be demolished, the new addition would be built and occupied as the main living quarters for the family and that once they are occupying that space they will begin the task of rehabilitating the old fieldstone section of the house. She said they look forward to uncovering old fireplaces and wide floor boards. Mr. Brown discussed some of his experience in renovating Union Station in Washington DC, restoring the Wainright house in New Hope and several residences in NJ and Bucks County PA. He provided a more detailed explanation of the plans stating that the 1880 wing would be demolished due to the choppy floor plan and low ceilings. He stated that the family would use a private entrance on the northern exposure of the house while guests would enter from the courtyard on the southern side through the existing structure. He added that the existing structure would be used as a library and a formal dining room for entertaining. He stated that he wanted to provide modern amenities and energy efficiency in the new section. The commissioners reviewed the plans. Ms. Ackerman said that she would like to see more information about the plans for the existing structure and would like for the HPC to be kept in the conversation regarding the interior plans. Several of the commissioners expressed concern that the new addition dwarfs the existing structure and it seems to disappear from sight. Mr. Hayden stated that the plans seem less like an addition being

added to the house and more like a house being added to a house. He also expressed concern that the existing structure's restoration is not being presented and what happens if money runs out and nothing gets done to restore the existing structure. Ms. Ackerman said that it seems as though Mr. Brown is being charged with designing a modern farmhouse and wondered why the conventions for designing modern farmhouses were not followed. Particularly, she noted, more attention should be paid to the southern elevation. She expressed concern that the family would be using the north side entryway and guests would be disinclined to use the southern side. Mr. Brown stated that the design of the house should respond to the way the owners intend to use it and they intend to use a private entrance on the north side. Mr. Hayden suggested that the view of the existing structure should remain intact from as many angles as possible and suggested relocating the garage portion of the addition and lowering the roofline of the addition to keep from overwhelming the existing structure. Mr. Blackwell stated that the new addition diminishes the context of the existing house and there is none of the sense of the old house. He suggested that similar language is used in the space of the wing to be demolished. Ms. Ackerman added that she would like to see all four elevations on the plans. She also recommended that the addition be reconfigured in more of an L shape to lessen the impact of its size. Ms. Crabtree said that preserving the view shed and the historic landscape is important. Mr. Brown stated that they were coming before the HPC to get an idea of which direction to go in and summarized the concerns of the HPC as follows:

- Mass of the addition (scale) should be diminished
- Form & fenestration ordered in more traditional manner & more formally composed on the southern elevation
- Relocate garage
- Diminish length
- Show plans for existing renovation
- Consider appropriate use of stone on addition

Mr. Hayden stated that all of the commissioners should have a copy of the plans prior to the formal COA review.

### **Bishop COA Review**

An application was received from the Bishop's for new garage doors. The commissioners reviewed the plans and delegated the final decision to chair Max Hayden under the diminimus change provision.

### ***Jacobs Creek Road Bridge Update***

Mr. Pogorzelski said that he received a letter from the county stating that they had reached a conclusion about the bridge on Bear Tavern Road over Jacobs Creek Bridge and that it would not be able to withstand renovations and still be a safe and viable structure so they had decided to replace it. He added that they had agreed to relocate it for use as a pedestrian bridge on the Alliger tract where the Veterans Memorial Park is situated. Ms. Ackerman asked why the bridge could not be relocated to Hunter Road where it could still be used by the Howell farm as possible light traffic. Mr. Pogorzelski stated that there were plans to make the old railbed along Jacobs Creek a pedestrian trail. Ms. Kotite asked if the types of trucks and tonnage allowed on the new bridge would

differ from that of the old bridge. Mr. Pogorzelski stated that the new bridge would be unrestricted but the township has control of the roadway north of rt 546 which will maintain a restricted use so increased truck traffic up rt 579 would be unlikely. He added that the HPC should list any concerns and forward them to him so that he may communicate them to the county. Ms. Sandom stated that she had worked for many years on the project to recommend options for repairing the bridge but in the end public safety was a concern with those plans. Mr. Pogorzelski said the county is flexible about the design of the replacement bridge even though they are currently proposing a replica iron truss bridge similar to the one on Province Line Road. Ms. Sandom expressed concern that a replica might not be sensitive to the context and that it is more important to preserve the scenic vista. She suggested that another style of bridge that blends in more with the surroundings might be considered. Mr. Hayden mentioned visiting some bridges in Somerset County and also the replica iron truss bridge on Province Line Road. The commissioners agreed to a special meeting to discuss the bridge options so that a recommendation can be made to the township committee.

**Township Historic Properties Committee:**

The commissioners discussed the plans for the replacement of the bridge on Rt 546 over Woolsey Brook and decided that the preservation of the land on the north side of the bridge near the Jeremiah Woolsey house property and that of the neighbor was more important than the loss of the old bridge abutment on the south side. Mr. Hayden stated that he had forwarded the deed restriction language for the Marshall's Corner Schoolhouse to Mr. Pogorzelski. The commissioners also discussed the issue of people using the schoolhouse site for parking.

**County Historic Properties Committee:**

Mr. Blackwell stated he received an email that was forwarded from a former commissioner regarding whether or not archaeological surveys were needed at the Hunt house site for the septic installation. The response was that they were not necessary.

**Landmarks Designation Committee:**

The commissioners discussed considering the following properties for designation in 2009: Cornelius Larison House, Mt. Rose Schoolhouse, Blackwell(Captain John Hart) farm, Hart/Hoch farmhouse. Moore farmhouse and the Stout/Wearth house.

**Community Outreach/ Public Relations:**

Mr. Hayden said he would work on branding and sign ideas with Ms. Kotite. The commissioners discussed designing new bookmarks for distribution and the corrections that were made to the brochure. They discussed the upcoming Spirit of the Jerseys festival at Washington Crossing Park on May 2nd and the deadline for submitting an application of March 27<sup>th</sup>. They discussed assigning the ideas for demonstrations to Mr. Robbins and possibly also appearing at the Veterans Memorial ceremony on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Ms. Ackerman said that she had been contacted by Mr. Fleagle from HVRHS regarding the documentary project and that even though the grant money for a more involved project was not awarded to the HPC they could still execute a more modest project with the help of the high school students. Mr. Hayden recommended getting oral histories from lifelong residents. Ms. Ackerman said she would contact the prospective interviewees.

**Survey & Planning:**

Applications for the following block and lots were reviewed with no comment: block 46

lot 27.02, block 122 lots 9 & 10, block 78 lot 21, block 8 lot 44.02 AND BLOCK 39  
LOT 24.

**Old Business:**

Ms. Sandom reminded the commissioners that she needed a mission statement, a list of accomplishments from 2008 and goals for 2009 for the March 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of all the commissions and boards. Ms. Ackerman asked about getting the ball rolling on replacing the signs at Howell farm. Mr. Hayden suggested contacting Joanne Meyer about the text on the previous signs. Mr. Miller agreed to photograph the old signs.

**New Business:**

Mr. Miller reported that the State has plans for a group camping building to be built in Washington Crossing State Park near Church Road and that there is a group of neighbors that are opposed to the idea. Mr. Miller also reported that the Else Barn required a repair to a section of the roof and mentioned that the doors needed locks.

At 11:25pn there being no further business the meeting was adjourned.