

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING OF**  
**THE HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP**  
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**TUESDAY September 15, 2009**

A regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held at the Municipal Building on Tuesday September 15, 2009 in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Chair Hayden called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm.

Commission members present: Betsy Ackerman, David Blackwell, Pam Crabtree (8:00), Max Hayden, Erika Kotite, Moira Lawrence & Phil Robbins.  
Township Committee: Mayor Sandom  
Township Administration: Paul Pogorzelski, Administrator/Engineer & Robert Miller, Zoning Officer  
Recording Secretary: Deborah Rishko

**General Topics**

***Review of HPC mail***

***Certificate of Appropriateness Review***

The commissioners reviewed revised plans for the Smith/Hunt/Hill house addition/renovation project. They remarked on the continued absence of plans for the existing structure and agreed to request them again. Ms. Ackerman made a motion to request plans that demonstrate the overall intention of the existing structure. Ms. Kotite seconded. All were in favor. A certificate of appropriateness was not granted.

***Jacobs Creek Bridge***

The commissioners each commented on the proposed replacement of the Jacobs Creek Bridge.

**Ms. Ackerman** responded to a question posed by Kim Robinson at the Special meeting of the HTHPC on September 9, 2009 regarding alternative # 2 and whether or not it was SOI compliant. Ms. Ackerman stated she obtained a copy of the report by Keller & Kirkpatrick to review that option and that alternative # 2 was deemed only marginally compliant. She then recounted how the HPC had sent a letter to Mr. Sandusky requesting that additional variations of alternate # 2 be explored which would allow the integrity of the original construction technology, for which the bridge was originally nominated, to remain unaltered. She explained that the HPC had made this recommendation because it found that alternative # 2 proposed more enhancement than was acceptable to achieve compliance.

**Mr. Robbins** read an email he had sent to the commissioners earlier in the day. In it he expressed the importance of preservation with regard to our national heritage, aesthetic appeal, and the impact on local tourism. He stressed that if the existing bridge is replaced then any hope of preserving the site will be lost.

**Mr. Blackwell** stated that Ms. Ackerman and Mr. Robbins were thorough in their

remarks and reiterated that the HPC considered emergency vehicles when considering the load limit of the bridge. He explained the technology of the truss bridge and how the HPC was challenged by the SHPO regarding an acceptable level of alterations required to increase the load limit of the bridge. He stated that once those alterations were made the HPC would have to be able to say that the bridge had not been significantly altered from a preservation standpoint and they could not. He added that the site is tremendously important to Washington's Victory Trail and that he had been in touch with Cate Litvak of the Crossroads of the American Revolution to inform her of the plans to replace the bridge and realign the road and how the issue may now be how the site could be altered as little as possible. He mentioned that he and Ms. Ackerman had even tried to come up with additional alternatives outside of the 12 in the report but none were acceptable. He stated that what needs attention is a site design and not a bridge design. He recommended slightly upgrading the bridge and leaving it in place.

**Ms. Kotite** stated that when she moved to the area from California she was struck by the memorable gateway the bridge and its surroundings provided for the area. She stated that she was not in favor of moving forward with plans to replace the bridge until further study of the historical significance of the area is completed.

**Mr. Hayden** stated that the bridge is one of the portals to the township and that he is interested in exploring the possibilities of safety issues with the bridge and traffic calming measures on Bear Tavern Road and throughout the township

**Ms. Crabtree** stated that she was on the Historic Preservation Commission when the bridge was designated and explained that King bridges are unique and that is why the original designation was made. She added that the HPC was unaware of the importance of the landscape at the time of the designation and that the HPC does not just preserve objects/buildings but also landscape.

**Don Timbie** of 22 Forrest Blend described a project in which a hotel built in 1909 was historically preserved while bringing it up to today's standards. He added that even though the bridge is a suspension bridge it does not have to work as one and can be modified in place.

**Rollin LaFrance** of 10 Lupine Lane stated that he is a retired architect and had worked for many years for a firm that had historic preservation projects and had showed a colleague the plans for the existing bridge to try to get his opinion on options for restructuring it but had not gotten feedback yet because the gentleman was on vacation. He requested any written materials the HPC might have on the bridge to assist in getting his friend's opinion.

**Beth Kerr** of 1139 Bear Tavern Road thanked the commissioners for their thoughtfulness and stated that Mr. Hughes had made an offer to keep a 4 ton restriction on Bear Tavern Road and asked about the impact of the restriction.

**Mr. Blackwell** stated that Mr. Sandusky had explained that there is no connection between weight restrictions on the roadway and building a new bridge that complies with current standards.

**Diane Strickler** of 22 Maddock Road stated that there were once markers with plaques on both sides of the bridge but that one marker is missing its plaque and now has graffiti on it. She stated that the site has been neglected and she hopes that the neglect will not continue.

**Mary Alicia Divine** of 6 Forrest Edge thanked the HPC and wanted to know what the

commissioners were planning to do next now that they have had time for discussion.

**Ms. Ackerman** explained that the commissioners were meeting and discussing the bridge for the first time since last week's meeting and are not permitted to meet and discuss things outside of public meetings.

**Kim Johnson** of 48 Orchard Ave asked if the bridge could remain in place and the new bridge could be built next to it with one way traffic on each bridge.

**Ms. Ackerman** said that option was discussed and that there are rigid SHPO guidelines regarding the proximity of new bridges to historic bridges.

**Mr. Blackwell** added that it would significantly alter the site.

**Kim Robinson** of 1568 Harbourton Rocktown Road stated that a different engineering study might yield additional alternatives.

**John Hansbury** of 1216 Bear Tavern Road thanked the commissioners and left an application for the HPC to file for national designation for the site.

**Mr. Blackwell** stated that since the bridge has already been deemed eligible it has the same benefits as a designated site.

**Ashley Kerr** asked if the bridge or the site had been deemed eligible.

**Mr. Blackwell** said only the bridge was deemed eligible.

**Mr. Hansbury** stated that the site should be preserved.

**Mr. Hayden** stated that in light of the current economic conditions the coalition should form a citizen's group along the lines of the Adopt-a-Highway program to maintain the area immediately surrounding the bridge and the memorial plaques.

**Ronnie Katz** of 52 Maddock Road explained that she had started a website containing information about the efforts to preserve the site.

**Ms. Ackerman** asked how the HPC reconciles the fact that the bridge was not in existence when Washington's troops crossed the creek.

**Mr. Blackwell** stated that he indicated that the site should be preserved for that reason.

**Mr. Robbins** stated that he felt preserving the site was important because so many historic sites have already been lost to development.

**Ms. Crabtree** stated that the book about the victory trail had not been written when the bridge was designated and stressed that an archeological study of the area needed to be done.

**Mr. Robbins** asked if an environmental study had been done yet.

**Ms. Crabtree** stated that it had not been done yet.

**Ms. Kotite** asked if professional were hired to do the study.

**Ms. Crabtree** said yes.

**Mr. Robbins** asked how the county can go ahead with plans if the survey has not been done yet.

**Ms. Crabtree and Ms. Ackerman** responded that the plans and permits are submitted and procured before the study is done.

**Mr. Blackwell** explained that the HPC's relationship with the county is always advisory because legally that is all it can be. He added that the Crossroads of the American Revolution needs to step in.

**Ms. Sandom** asked about the group.

**Mr. Blackwell** explained that the group has headquarters nearby and that there was a survey done recently to see what groups manage historic sites. He explained that the Victory Trail goes down Bear Tavern Road to Trenton and up to Princeton and that it is

important to preserve Hopewell's piece of the trail.

**Ms. Ackerman** asked if the commission would be voting or just discussing and stated that she felt that the site is a separate issue from the bridge.

**Ms. Crabtree** stated that the HPC should send a letter to the county that recommends that the Crossroads of the American Revolution be given a seat at the table.

The commissioners agreed that they have done all they can do and that pressure from a larger group like the Crossroads will be necessary to continue the discussion about preserving the site. They agreed that they did not have enough information to recommend a replacement bridge. They discussed the content of the letter to the county and agreed that the Crossroads group should become part of the process and the Califon "slice and dice" solution should be revisited. Mr. Blackwell said that the moment the bridge is removed the replacement bridge will have to comply with current standards and have a load capacity of at least 25 tons. He said the Crossroads group may create an historic district.

**Ms. Ackerman** voiced fears that the bridge may be lost in the same way that the Province Line Road bridge was lost if action isn't taken.

**Mr. Robbins** suggested reaching out to Ewing Township since many of the bridge's neighbors are Ewing Township residents.

**Mr. Hayden** stated that the issue is now beyond the purview of the HPC. He agreed to draft the letter to the county.

**Ms. Ackerman** made a motion to compose a letter to the county to revisit plans for the bridge based on the site, to express gratitude for being given the opportunity to weigh in on the new bridge design and explain that they felt that they did not have enough information to choose a replacement bridge and to recommend the involvement of the Crossroads of the American Revolution.

**Ms. Kotite** seconded. All were in favor.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **County Historic Properties Committee:**

The commissioners discussed the progress of the Hunt house project and getting an update from the county.

#### **Township Historic Properties:**

Mr. Pogorzelski stated that FOHVOS had requested a driveway easement at the Marshall's Corner Schoolhouse and he also mentioned that he had received an email from a party interested in using the building that he would forward to the commissioners.

#### **Landmarks Designation Committee:**

Mr. Blackwell stated that there will not be time to designate all the properties that were previously agreed upon due to the amount of research required and the time constraints of the designation process. The commissioners agreed to narrow down the number of designations.

#### **Survey & Planning:**

The commissioners reviewed plans for block 98 lot 17 comment pending.

#### **Community Outreach**

The commissioners discussed Mt. Rose Distillery day. Ms. Lawrence and Ms. Kotite agreed to work together to distribute brochures.

#### **Old Business:**

Mr. Hayden sent a letter in support of preserving the Presbyterian church in Ewing. The commissioners discussed locating the negatives for the old photos and searching the file cabinets in the basement prior to the start of the October meeting.

**New Business:**

Ms. Ackerman and Mr. Hayden volunteered to serve on the task force/planning group for the Pennytown/Kooltronics redevelopment zone.

At 10:15pm there being no further business the meeting was adjourned.