

MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION TUESDAY December 15, 2009

A regular meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held at the Municipal Building on Tuesday December 15, 2009 in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Chair Hayden called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm.

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

Township Committee: Mayor Sandom

Township Administrator/Engineer: Paul Pogorzelski

Recording Secretary: Deborah Rishko

General Topics

Jacob's Creek Bridge Site

Mr. Blackwell reported that he had been doing research to pinpoint the location of the site where Washington's troops crossed Jacob's Creek. He stated that he has been working on the material for designating the site. Mr. Pogorzelski asked if the troops would have used the location of the existing roadway. Mr. Blackwell said that his research has revealed that there were several springs that caused cuts in the cliff and one of them on the Kerr property most likely formed the cut in the cliff where the road is today and where the troops would have crossed. He added that the Erskine map and an account of the crossing confirmed the location of the bridge and roadway as the location of the crossing as well. He suggested that the site be called Washington's Hollow. He said that he would like to write a letter supporting Ashley Kerr's application for the site to be placed on the National Trust for Historic Designation's list of 11 Most Endangered Sites. He added that Mary Jane Cooper is donating a portion of the land she owns in Ewing that would be part of the site. He distributed the letter to the commissioners for review and added that the canons that were lowered down the bank of the creek were integral in the victory at the Battle of Trenton. The commissioners and Mr. Pogorzelski discussed revisions to the letter. Mr. Robbins asked if the designation would be for the bridge the site or both. Mr. Blackwell stated that the goal is to modify the existing bridge in order to save the site. He said that the National Trust for Historic Designation is interested in solutions for the preservation of the site. Mr. Pogorzelski stated that efforts to preserve the site should not address what happens to the bridge. Mr. Robbins stated that the best way to preserve the site is to preserve the bridge. Ms. Ackerman stated that she wants to see what will happen to the bridge plans if the site is preserved and does not want to advocate solutions for the bridge. Mr. Blackwell stated that the letter is more thorough than it needs to be and he will work on revising it. He asked if the commissioners agreed that modifying the existing bridge is integral to preserving the site. Mr. Robbins said that the viewshed is important. Mr. Pogorzelski stated that when he met with the Crossroads of the American Revolution they stated that a new bridge can function in the same

location. Mr. Robbins said that a new bridge can be seen as priming the pump for more traffic. Mr. Pogorzelski stated that there will be more traffic no matter what. Mr. Robbins said that he was told that the town takes care of the roads they want used the most. Mr. Pogorzelski said that was not the case and that protections have been built in to restrict heavy truck traffic on the road. Ms. Crabtree said that the discussion about preserving the bridge has evolved into so much more that it is worth revisiting strengthening the existing bridge now that the significance of the site is known. Mr. Pogorzelski stated that the bridge task force was concerned with the ability of emergency vehicles to use the existing bridge. Mr. Hayden recommended keeping the T alignment. Ms. Ackerman noted that the new road alignment necessitates a longer bridge. Mr. Pogorzelski said that the alignment was carefully planned. Ms. Sandom asked if both the bridge and the site could be preserved by moving the existing bridge and replacing it. Ms. Ackerman said they are two separate issues. Mr. Robbins stated that the first priority should be the site and then the bridge and that there is room to wiggle on the bridge. Mr. Pogorzelski expressed concern that the HPC would be endorsing an application it has not seen. Ms. Sandom suggested that the commissioners support the local designation of the site if they are comfortable that the research will stand up to scrutiny. Mr. Blackwell stated that he is comfortable with the research and that there have been plenty of occasions where the HPC has written letters of support. Mr. Pogorzelski asked if a resolution should be done or just a letter written by the chair. The commissioners decided to write a letter stating the importance of the site without referencing the application that they have not all reviewed.

Motion made by Ms. Crabtree seconded by Ms. Lawrence that the HPC recognizes the historic importance of the Jacobs Creek Bridge site and plans to explore local designation in 2010 and that a letter drafted by Mr. Blackwell with revisions would be forwarded to the National Trust for Historic Designation to place the site on the list of 11 Most Endangered Sites.

All were in favor.

Minutes for approval

The minutes of the October and the November regular meetings were approved.

Survey & Planning:

Comment pending on an application submitted for block 133 lot 14. Mr. Robbins volunteered to do a site visit.

County Historic Sites:

Mr. Robbins stated that progress is being made at the Hunt house. Ms. Ackerman stated that members of the HPC should be attending the meetings regarding progress.

Community Outreach:

The commissioners discussed wording for the signs and decided that Twin Pines will not be one of the signs because it is not on the Lawrence Hopewell Trail. Mr. Hayden volunteered to write the material for the Enos Titus sign. Ms. Ackerman suggested that a sign be done for the Noah Hunt house. Mr. Blackwell volunteered to write the material for the Noah Hunt house sign. Mr. Robbins reported that he gave three boxes of

brochures to Mr. Mauer and they had been distributed to various locations in town. Ms. Kotite stated that she and Ms. Lawrence would begin work editing the information for the new bookmarks. She also questioned the role of the Harbourton District subcommittee. Mr. Pogorzelski stated that it is important to have a master plan for the district so that it is ready for grant opportunities. Ms. Ackerman stated that the subcommittee should probably focus on the areas in need of definition. Ms. Kotite stated that she had researched the current plans for the area on the DOT and County websites. Mr. Pogorzelski recommended that the subcommittee should create the vision for the area so that it can be packaged for grants. Ms. Kotite proposed setting a date for a walk through of the district in January. The commissioners discussed participating in the Spirit of the Jerseys Fair in May 2010. Mr. Pogorzelski stated that he would assist Mr. Miller with scheduling a time for a tour of Baldpate Mountain. Mr. Hayden drafted a letter to the Koseks regarding the COA and the commissioners approved forwarding the letter to the Koseks.

Township Historic Properties:

Mr. Hayden stated that he and Ms. Ackerman had made a site visit to Pennytown as part of the Pennytown Redevelopment Task Force and explained that the goal of the task force is to make recommendations for possible uses of the redevelopment zone. Ms. Crabtree asked if the township would become a landlord and rent the Cornelius Larison house or if it would be sold. Mr. Pogorzelski said that the township is looking for recommendations from the HPC. He added that they would be integrated with those of the task force and the Affordable Housing Committee. Mr. Hayden asked if the septic system would be an issue. Mr. Pogorzelski stated that there would be a new wastewater plan. Mr. Robbins suggested using the same 100 year lease model as Washington Crossing State Park. Mr. Pogorzelski added that the FOHVOS wanted to use some of the land belonging to Marshall's Corner schoolhouse for a driveway to their property. The commissioners discussed repairing the roof to the schoolhouse. Ms. Ackerman said she would get estimates.

Landmarks Designation Committee

Mr. Blackwell reported that he has made progress on the designations of the Cornelius Larison house, the Moore farmhouse and the two Stony Brook Watershed properties. He added that he visited the Kerr farmstead and deemed it worthy of inclusion on the register.

New Business:

The commissioners expressed their gratitude to Mayor Sandom for her work on the HPC as the Committee liaison.

At 9:40 pm there being no further business the meeting was adjourned.