

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Westtown Municipal Building, 1039 Wilmington Pike, West Chester
Thursday, September 17, 2015 6:00 PM

In attendance: Commission members Dave Walter, Gail Guterl, Pam Boulos, Pat McDonough, Erica Reilly and Dan Campbell. Township Manager Rob Pingar and Supervisors Mike Di Domenico and Tom Haws were also in attendance.

I. **Call to Order**

Dave Walter called the meeting to order at 6:10 PM.

II. **Special Township Business**

Mike Di Domenico and Tom Haws were present to discuss the duties and responsibilities of the Historical Commission (HC), as well as potential areas for growth. Mike stated that he would like to engage the HC in more proactive and interactive communications. Discussed the responsibilities and expectations of the HC. He would like to do more in the educational sector, such as the historic list, ordinance and info to the public. The Supervisors would also like to put together a book of historic resources, such as a “then and now” of the township.

The Supervisors will be submitting an RFP for a compensation plan while they are reviewing all ordinances. One will be the Historic Commission’s Amendment. Advised there is a budgetary line item for the Commission allocating money. The HC was not aware there had been money put aside. Considered adding a Treasurer to the HC.

Mike stated he wanted to have a big kickoff meeting with all the commissions so they can reduce silos and increase cooperation between the groups.

The Supervisors advised there are no special protections for 1142 Wilmington Pike structures following the withdrawal of the developer. This was met with some concern by the Commission, who had hoped to have the property saved from demolition.

III. **Approval of Minutes from August 20, 2015**

Erica Reilly made a motion to approve the August 20, 2015 minutes, with Pam Boulos seconding the motion. The minutes were approved without comment.

IV. **Public Comment (non-agenda items)**

None

V. Old Business

A. National Register of Historic Places Application for Oakbourne Mansion

Two proposals were put forth to prepare an eligibility application for Oakbourne Mansion to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Dave Walter advised that a plaque similar to the one for the POW Camp Elder could be purchased for less than \$2000. This could potentially be used for prestige and publicity, but there will be no cost savings or a tax break afforded the mansion. Dan Campbell stated that they might get grants when replacing materials for the mansion. Pam Boulos suggested adding this to the list of goals for the HC.

B. Situation with 1142 Wilmington Pike

Following the withdrawal of the developer Bozzuto, who had agreed to preserve 1142 Wilmington Pike, the circa 1870 serpentine stone structure and surrounding structures are no longer protected and can be razed by the owners of Crebilly Farm.

Gail had previously asked if Dan Campbell would share a story about his historic home in the next newsletter, which is slated for November 10. Dan agreed to do so. It was decided to revise the story and include an article about 1142 Wilmington Pike, its history and importance to the area.

C. Historic Resources List Letter

The HC has been creating a Historic Resources List, which will be shown to the public. A letter was drafted by Mike and edited by Gail Guterl. Erica Reilly offered a few suggestions to make the letter sound less formidable. Gail offered to send Erica the letter to make additional changes.

D. Taylor Burial Ground Marker Status

The Veterans Administration (VA) turned down Susan Van Vonno, a descendant of Col. Thomas Taylor and his sons Titus and Thomas Jr., who was seeking to erect a marker to commemorate their involvement in the Revolutionary War and mark the area where they are buried on Tower Course Drive.

Dave explained that the VA told them they can't prove that the Taylor's unit, 6th Battalion-Westtown, Chester County Pennsylvania Militia, was federalized or was present at the battle. Also can't prove the Taylors were buried at that location. Dave has a book from 1881 but that is all he has for proof. Susan is going to try and raise funds with other Taylor family members she has been in contact with.

The Commission discussed the need for an organized method of collecting money. Erica suggested GoFundMe, an online site where people can donate funds. Pat suggested using funds to match Susan's fundraiser and encouraging people to match.

E. Photography Project — Westtown Today

The HC is embarking on a project to document Westtown Township. Assignments will be decided on at the next meeting.

VI. **New Business**

A. **Westtown Historic Day**

Dave discussed how he recently gave a 45-minute PowerPoint presentation on Camp Elder that was extremely well received. This led him to the idea of staging a Westtown Historic Day, where the Commission and others can give presentations, show photos of historic Westtown and tell stories of some of our more famous settlers. Could blow up photos of homes on boards and possibly get reenactors. It would be held at Oakbourne Mansion. The budget would be \$1000. Pat advised he would see about taking tours of the Oakbourne water tower.

VII. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.