

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Westtown Municipal Building, 1039 Wilmington Pike, West Chester
Thursday, November 19, 2015 6:00 PM

In attendance: Commission members David Walter, Gail Guterl, Pam Boulos, Eileen Fresta, Erica Reilly and Dan Campbell.

I. **Call to Order**

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

II. **Approval of Minutes from October 15, 2015**

Gail Guterl amended the minutes to say the adjournment time was 6:45 PM. This change was agreed on by the Commission. Gail then made a motion to approve the October 15, 2015 minutes, with Pam Boulos seconding the motion. The minutes were approved.

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

None

IV. **Old Business**

A. **Chester County Historic Preservation Network (CCHPN) Meeting**

Gail Guterl, Eileen Fresta and Pam Boulos attended the CCHPN meeting on October 24. They stated there were a number of informational lectures at the event, which they attended for more than three hours.

B. **Board of Supervisors Meeting**

Erica Reilly discussed the Board of Supervisors meeting she attended on November 2. She gave a report to the Board about current projects the Commission was involved with. There were two people in attendance who had concerns with the Historic Resources Map:

Walt Pavelchek, who contacted the Commission prior to the meeting, disagreed with the assessment of his home, 1050 S. New Street, because it was built on the remains of a barn that was burnt out. A new home was built using one of the old walls but a new interior. The board agreed to amend his listing.

Don Asplen of 949 and 950 South New Street was worried that this listing would be a precursor to HARB requirements. He commended the Commission for fostering awareness of historic resources, but had concerns that this would lay the foundation for additional historic regulations such as HARB. Erica advised both residents that their concerns would be reported to the Commission.

Dave also reported they had heard from a woman who owns property on 1420 Manley. The Bartram Family Burial Ground is located on her property. According to

former HC member Jon Hoppe, when the cemetery was relocated not all of the Bartram family bodies were moved. The resident would like it noted that the property is historic but her actual dwelling is not.

Dave asked Dan Campbell to revisit a previous letter he had drafted asking residents if the Commission could photograph the interior or exterior of historic listings or get information about the property. These would go in the historic resources file. Dan agreed to do so.

Eileen will be attending the next Board of Supervisors meeting on December 7 representing the Commission.

C. 1142 Wilmington Pike

There are still BOS hearings regarding Crebilly Farm and the SUO. There is a citizen's meeting on Monday, November 23. Dan stated that he will attend this meeting and report back to the Commission.

The Westminster Church appeared before the Planning Commission about flipping the property back to the Robinson family. The Robinsons have already talked to demolition people about houses they are planning to raze when they receive the land/structures back from the church.

D. Taylor Burial Ground Marker Status

The local chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, Daughters of the American Revolution, a contact at the Paoli Battlefield and another contact on the Veterans Council are working on drumming up interest and press for the fundraising effort to purchase a marker for Col. Thomas Taylor and his sons commemorating their involvement in the Revolutionary War. Dave stated the West Chester local press hasn't been interested in running the story. He also approached Bill Mason of WCHE, who hasn't gotten back to him.

Paoli has launched their fundraiser and already raised \$1,500 of the \$8,000 needed. Jon Hoppe also completed a short bio of each of the five soldiers to help with fundraising efforts.

E. Westtown Community Day

Westtown Community Day is scheduled for September 17, 2016 at the Oakbourne Mansion. The Commission will begin planning the event. Pictures of historic dwellings will be blown up and displayed on easels. Dave will give a lecture on Camp Elder POW Camp and Gail is still looking for an actor to portray Isaac Winters, who was a sexton at Shiloh AME Church. Pat is looking into giving tours of the water tower.

F. Photography Project — Westtown Today

The Commission is dividing Westtown Township up into seven zones, where each member will photograph commercial and historic structures. Individual homes will not be photographed. Pam will create an electronic map of each member's assigned area, but a general area for each was decided:

Gail – West side of Wilmington Pike

Dan – Concord Road East along 352 and North of Rt. 3

Eileen – West of 352 to Westtown School (Includes Pennwood School, condos, marketplace)

Pam – West of Westtown School to the Railroad (Rustin, West, Liberty Square Townhouses)

Erica – East Pleasant Grove Road/Westbourne Road (Former Acme, current Walgreens complex)

Dave – Coventry Road and the rest

V. New Business

A. Brandywine Battlefield Task Force

Dave was appointed to a subcommittee of the Brandywine Battlefield Task Force. They are targeting two Brandywine Valley properties for preservation.

One is Trimble's Ford in Pocopson Twp. The location of this ford had disappeared over the years, but was recently located with ground penetrating radar.

The second parcel is a portion of Crebilly Farm parcel. There are two parcels under consideration. The historical significance of these properties is that approximately 300 British Light Infantry and German Hessians are believed to have passed through on this ground. A German officer's diary discussed a battle on this land, so the opening skirmishes of the Brandywine Battlefield could have taken place on Crebilly Farm.

The Civil War Trust is morphing into the American Battlefield Trust, and are already onboard with meetings to discuss possible purchases.

B. Westtown Gazette

Pat is writing the article for the winter issue of the gazette. The article will be about Downing Cottage, the structure on 1142 Wilmington Pike. Eileen will be writing an article about geography globes at Westtown School for the spring issue. Dan will be writing about his historic farmhouse in the summer issue.

C. Living History

Gail and Erica conducted an interview with Barbara Bentley (nee Cheyney), who grew up on a farm along 202. She was born in 1937. Her family is of the original Cheyneys and she lived on a home given to her by her grandmother, Edith Cheyney. Barb's birthplace was torn down but the home she raised her children in is still standing, on Robin's Nest Lane. Erica and Gail recorded Barbara's recollections of Westtown. One of Barbara's most interesting memories is how an air mail plane would collect mail from a post on top of the hill where Starkweather School now stands.

D. Historic Resource Contact

Pamela stated that she has been speaking with Kevin Donaghy, a Temple University PhD candidate who wants to speak with the commission. His research on the Brandywine Battlefield is his dissertation projects. He is looking for artifacts relating to that time period. The commission does not have any historic artifacts besides photos and files. Dave suggested Kevin talking to Karen Marshall, as there are plenty of artifacts from Brandywine Battlefield. The Brinton 1704 house may also have artifacts.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10PM