

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Westtown Municipal Building, 1039 Wilmington Pike, West Chester
Thursday, February 21, 2019 6:00 P.M.

In attendance: Commission members Erica Reilly, Gail Guterl, Paul Mullin, Dave Walter, Ray Sarnacki, Dan Campbell; Planning Technician Mila Robinson.

I. Call to Order

Erica Reilly (ER) called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

II. Approval of Minutes from January 17, 2019

Ray Sarnacki (RS) motioned to approve the minutes. Paul Mullin (PM) seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved

III. Public Comment (non-agenda items)

None.

IV. Old Business

A. BOS Meeting Report: Because of illness Pam Boulos (PB) was not able to attend the WTHC meeting. She will submit a report via email to the commissioners.

B. Shiloh AME Update: The WTHC had a discussion on opportunities to preserve this African-American graveyard and site of an AME church. WTHC will follow up with Rob Pingar, Township Manager, on how to proceed forward.

RS shared an article about proposed legislation in Congress, the African American Burial Grounds Network Act, by GA Reps. A. Donald McEachin and Alma S. Adams. This legislation would create a voluntary national network of historic African-American burial grounds, and would provide information, technical support, and grants to aid in the research, identification, preservation, and restoration of burial sites within the network. McEachin and Adams proposed this legislation because typically African American cemeteries have suffered “unjust abuse and neglect” over the years.

RS also pointed out that he has registered the Shiloh AME cemetery on the PA Archeological Site Survey (PASS) administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC). PASS is a log of archeology sites identified within Pennsylvania. PHMC has an initiative aimed at putting more black history-related sites on the National Register of Historic Places with an initial focus on churches and cemeteries.

C. History of Westtown Book – Status Updates: Dave Walter (DW), Gail Guterl (GG) and Jim Guterl (JG) visited Wynnorr Farms and got a tour of this amazing property from one of the property owners. JG took many pictures of the property; some will be

used in the history book. All photos will be shared with the owners of the farm. The history of this property, which began with the Hoopes family, is now recorded in the updated history book. The book has grown from about 59 pages to about 165 pages. We have many new historic photos in the document. It is progressing toward the May unveiling on the township website. A few assignments need to be completed.

- D. Update on Veteran's Memorial Project:** Mila Robinson (MR) displayed a site plan for the Veterans Memorial to be constructed at Oakbourne Park. The plan needs to be approved by the BOS.
- E. Huey Property Status:** RS had a meeting with Heather Wholey, archeology professor at West Chester University, whose students will conduct a dig of the Huey property on South New Street once the weather improves. They expect to dig Thursdays and Fridays. RS said he will be on site as often as possible and that there will be opportunities for supervised community digs on several Saturdays. Those interested must be at least high school age and older. Any pits dug will need to be secured. RS will ask the township for some plywood sheets to protect the pits.

Dr. Wholey said WCU has a museum classroom with exhibits that rotate every 6 months. The Anthropology Department plans to have a display of artifacts gleaned from the Entrikin farm that used to be on Stadium Drive, adjacent to the former Huey farm property just north of the Westtown Township border. Samuel Entrikin married Mary Huey, daughter of the original Hueys. Dr. Wholey has a student who will present her research findings on the Entrikin property and invited the WTHC and possibly the Westtown BOS to attend a lecture on this at the university. RS raised the question of storing the artifacts found at the Huey property. The University will retain the artifacts while they process them and include some of them in the Entrikin display. However, a long term storage solution needs to be determined.

- F. Historic Resource Listing Updates for 2018:** MR outlined a standard operating procedure for the WTHC to use when changes to the Historic Resources List need to be approved. She also explained the step by step process to the WTHC. RS pointed out that we can maintain a GIS (Geographic Information System) map that easily integrates with the Chester County Tax Parcel map available on ChescoViews. Doing this would eliminate duplication of data that leads to errors.
- G. Oakbourne Mansion Historical Marker:** DW has created 90-word text for the historic sign at Oakbourne Mansion/Park. DW proposes putting the sign in the area of the deceleration lane in front of the mansion property on South Concord Road.

V. New Business

- A. Search for Kirgan Tombstone Resting Place:** An article appeared in the *Daily Local News* about the Valentine Kirgan tombstone that was removed years ago from the Taylor Burial Ground, which is now on the site of the Pleasant Grove neighborhood. DW contacted the reporter and was interviewed. Kirgan, a Westtown

resident, was a mason on the first state capitol building. So far no descendant of Kirgan has come forward. DW contacted the Birmingham-Lafayette Cemetery and learned it is possible to place a stone in the cemetery without having a grave. This would cost \$300. Kirgan's daughter and several granddaughters of Kirgan are buried in this cemetery.

VI. Public Comment (All topics)

None.

VII. Announcements

None.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 P.M.