

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Westtown Municipal Building, 1039 Wilmington Pike, West Chester
Thursday, April 18, 2019 6:00 P.M.

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

I. Call to Order

Erica Reilly (ER) called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM.

II. Approval of Minutes from March 21, 2019

Ray Sarnacki (RS) had a minor change to the March 2019 minutes—RS met Heather Wholey met at her office. With that change, RS voted, Gail Guterl (GG) seconded.

III. Public Comment (non-agenda items)

None.

IV. Old Business

A. Board of Supervisors Meeting Report – Gail Guterl

The Board of Supervisors (BOS) is going to consider whether they want to accept a free Brandywine Battlefield historical marker at a later date.

B. Huey Property – Update on Work: RS went over to the Huey Property site with Rick Brown of Friends of Oakbourne. A metal detector was used to attempt to locate the foundation. Some cut nails from as early as the 19th century and a pottery shard were found. The shard appeared to be more modern, but it had not been dated by a pottery expert. RS emailed with Professor Heather Wholey, and she planned to open up at least two pits by the end of the month. RS has been in contact with George Csete (GC). GC performs site laser scanning for 3-dimensional imaging. He agreed to meet Ray on the site a week from Sunday. RS will confirm whether he will do the laser scanning *pro bono*.

RS proposed to do a community-based archaeology dig, but there was some resistance to making it a public effort, for fear that it would become too uncontrolled. RS will canvass the local neighborhood to get a small number of volunteers for the effort.

C. Shiloh AME: The Shiloh AME topic was delayed until the May BOS workshop meeting. If the BOS decides not to pursue ownership of the property, a non-profit can be established; alternatively, the Student's Veterans Group (SVG) could approach

the owner. GG will communicate with Alecc Costanzi of the SVG to let him know whether Shiloh AME is an agenda item for the May BOS workshop meeting.

- D. History of Westtown Book – Working Draft on Google Docs:** GG printed out the book and has been reviewing it and ensuring the accuracy of the table of contents. GG has a few questions that she will be emailing various Historical Commission members. GG will draft an updated introduction. All discussed having a second party review/edit the document. ER will reach out to an editor to get a proposal for editing the book. All agreed to push the deadline to June, since we are missing a section on Bayard Rustin High School. Paul Mullin (PM) will review the Table of contents.
- E. Update on Veteran’s Memorial Project:** Mila Robinson (MR) noted that Carter van Dyke Associates are developing bid package for the Veteran’s Memorial Project. Friends of Oakbourne will review the landscaping plan to determine the maintenance required for the proposed plantings.
- F. Oakbourne Mansion Roadside Marker and Brandywine Battlefield Marker:** The Oakbourne Mansion Roadside marker will not be installed this year. The BOS would prefer to wait until the new Oakbourne Park electronic sign is installed to have a better sense of where the roadside marker could go.
- G. Kirgan Tombstone Resting Place:** The Township has delivered the tombstone to the cemetery. On Saturday May 4th, at 9 am (tentatively) there will be a small installation ceremony. GG said Jim Guterl would volunteer to take photos. A Taylor ancestor in Chadds Ford has been notified.

V. New Business

- A. Research on 131 E Street Road:** PM went through all the deeds on this property and compiled a history. In 1792, John Taylor of Westtown sold the land to Richard Few, a freed slave, who was a cooper (barrel maker). It was rare at that time for African Americans to own such a large property and business. Richard Few’s son, Jacob, further expanded the property, purchasing 16 additional acres from Benedict Darlington. The property stayed in the Few family until 1864, and housed a farm and a butcher business during that time period.

VI. Public Comment (All topics)

None.

VII. Announcements

Tuesday, April 23rd from 9:45-11 am: Alexander Hamilton (portrayed by local historian and author Gene Pisasale) will be speaking at the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Spellman Hall about “The Founding of America’s Financial System”.

Thursday, May 2 at 7 pm: Dave Walter will be speaking at the West Whiteland Township Building on Chester County Civil War Generals.

Tuesday, May 21 from 9:45 to 11 am: Dr. Robert Poole (who was a visiting physician at Oakbourne Home for Convalescent Women) will be speaking at the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Spellman Hall on what it was like to practice medicine in Chester County in the 1950s.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 P.M.