

Franklin Township Historic Preservation Advisory Commission

Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes

May 3, 2016

Location

Franklin Township Municipal Building, 475 DeMott Lane, Somerset, NJ

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Mr. Burian at 7:30 pm in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Law of 1975.

Attendance

Members: Jean Ambrose (arrived 7:35), Andrew Burian, Thomas Gale, Susan Goldey, Anthony Ganim, Jean Gierlich, Joanne Kaiser (arrived 7:40), Robert LaCorte, Barbara ten Broeke

Alternate: Nancy Hohnstine

Staff: Vincent Dominach, Senior Zoning Officer

Council Liaison: Dr. Theodore Chase

Absent

Historian: Robert Mettler

After taking roll, Mr. Gale noted that there was a quorum and that, with the absences, Ms. Hohnstine would be voting.

Guests

Bill Bowman, reporter, Franklin Reporter & Advocate

Nicholas P Mariano, Esq., for 852 Easton Ave, Somerset, NJ, 16-00008

Formal Reviews

1. Review of a Certificate of Appropriateness (CoA) application submitted by Remax Our Town requesting approval to replace a freestanding sign at 852 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ, Block 383, Lot 39, zoned OP and located within the D&R Canal Local Historic District. File 16-00008

The Commission heard testimony from Nicholas Mariano, Esq., as well as reviewed the CoA application, with a set of documents that include: a site survey by Bartolone and Associates, dated 11/25/1985; a printed black and white photo of the front façade of the office which has been converted from a residence, dated 7/10/13; a undated printed color photo of the existing sign; and a photo simulation of the proposed pylon sign prepared by Ace Sign Inc., dated 3/17/16.

Mr. Mariano reminded the Commission that he had submitted applications for siding, door, and window replacements [3/14/12] as well as a building mounted sign replacement [2/4/14] in the past few years. Mr. Mariano explained that the existing freestanding pole mounted directory panel sign is rusting and needs to be replaced. He said the proposed sign would be a brown tone-aluminum pylon with a redesigned panel. The Commission learned that the size of the replacement panel would be 8'x5' and, when asked by Ms. Ambrose, Mr. Mariano said the sign would be internally lit.

The sign is located at the foot of the driveway for the first building of four served by a side service road parallel with and immediately adjacent to Easton Avenue. The four buildings are typical mid-

20th century two story residences that are related to the general pattern of development of the area. Three of the four have been converted to offices which the replacement directory sign will advertise.

No public chose to comment on this application.

A motion was made (LaCorte) and seconded (Ambrose) to **approve the Certificate of Appropriateness application to install a replacement freestanding sign as submitted** as the Commission felt that the property has no known historic value and that the project should have little negative effect on the property and the local historic district. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Informal Reviews

None

Correspondence

1. Mr. Burian reported that there had been follow-up correspondence regarding Section 106 review of the cellular installation modification at Harrison Towers, 575 Easton Avenue, Somerset, NJ. Mr. Dominach said once an application is submitted it will come before the Commission.

Unfinished Business

1. CLG
Mr. Burian and Mr. Dominach mentioned the need to have updated resumes from all Commission members and then the CLG application can be resubmitted.

Approval of Minutes of April 2016 meeting

A motion to **approve the HPAC regular monthly meeting minutes of April 5, 2016 as submitted** was made Mr. Burian, seconded Ms. ten Broeke and passed by unanimous voice vote.

Reports

1. Township Open Space Advisory Committee
Mr. LaCorte reported that the April OSAC meeting was cancelled.
2. Historic Resource Survey Committee
Mr. Burian reported that the committee needs to be reorganized. Ms. Ambrose said she was willing to participate but preferred not to be Chair.

New Business

1. Eagle Scout Projects
Mr. Burian solicited ideas for possible Eagle Scout projects that might benefit the Township. There was a discussion of the requirements of such projects including that the Eagle Scout organize and lead a group of other volunteers in completing the project. Also discussed were safety concerns with some projects.

Ms. ten Broeke said that there is a need for docents but learned that might not satisfy the leadership requirements. She and others mentioned improving neglected cemeteries including locations on Weston Canal, Randolph, and South Middlebush Roads but safety issues were raised. Working on the Township's historic structures was also mentioned but again safety issues were raised.

Ms. Gierlich suggested that there is a portion of the abandoned railroad right-of-way next to the Memorial Forest that might be cleared to allow public access to some of the unique features there. Members recalled the controversy that the proposal of a full rail-trail on the right-of-way from South Middlebush to Elizabeth Avenue raised but Ms. Gierlich explained that she was just suggesting a small area immediately west of Amwell Road.

Ms. Goldey mentioned that many of the mile markers that once populated the D&R Canal towpath have gone missing and that maybe installing replacements would be a good project.

2. Amwell Road historic sign by Stage House

Mr. LaCorte had no update on the sign but expected to have more information soon.

3. Recent projects in local historic districts

Members reported several projects that appear to have been completed without CoA application review including a sign for a new store at the corner of Easton Avenue and Cedar Grove Lane [it was learned following the meeting that the Commission would be reviewing the application in June]. Also mentioned was the name change for the new liquor store at the same location. Members speculated that since it was just a name change and didn't involve a new design that it wasn't seen as a reviewable zoning issue. Another project discussed was the rebuilding of the fire damaged office building at the corner Easton and Foxwood. Mr. Burian said that Mr. Dominach explained that the project was done under the category of emergency repair and were in-kind repairs so did not require full Commission review.

4. Slate Roof Bible

Ms. Hohnstien reported that she had come across the book in a used book pile and wondered what might be done with it. Mr. Burian said it was an important reference book that is now rare so suggested that the Commission hold on to it for reference.

5. Honeyman House

Mr. LaCorte reported that the historic John Honeyman House on Canal Road at the foot of Bunker Hill Road had been purchased by the BOE President so he expected that it will be well cared for.

6. Corrections

Mr. Gale noted that the Spring/Summer 2016 Township newsletter had incorrect dates for the May, June, July and August HPAC meetings. He also pointed out that the Franklin Township Trails 2016 Calendar misidentified the photo on the cover as the Pleasant Plains Schoolhouse when in fact it is of the abandoned house next to Laird's Store south of the intersection of South Middlebush and Suydam Roads. There didn't seem any way to effectively correct the dates in the newsletter as the next one won't come out until after the dates have passed. Members discussed including a correction on the photo in the Township newsletter and possibly including an article about the Township's one room school houses. Mr. Gale agreed to contact Joyce Miller about the dates, correction, and article parameters and Mr. Burian agreed to help the the schoolhouse article.

Public Discussion

None

Upcoming Meetings

Mr. Burian, Mr. Gale, Ms. Goldey, and Ms. ten Broeke have been confirmed to attend the 2016 New Jersey Historic Preservation Conference being held at Seton Hall University on June 8th and 9th.

Next Meeting Announcement

June 7, 2016

Adjournment

At 8:10 p.m. a motion to adjourn the regular meeting was made and passed by unanimous voice vote.

Training

Mr. Gale led an architectural plan reading training session with all members participating. The session lasted until 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Gale, Secretary

EC:

Robert Vornlocker, Township Manager
Ann Marie McCarthy, Township Clerk
Mark Healey, Director of Planning
Vincent Dominach, Senior Zoning Officer
FTHPAC members