

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

7/18/2012

**Present:** Eileen Stokes, Susan Penney, Jen Gorini

**Not present:** Bill Beute, Dale Blum, Ed Gagne, Gregg Forsbrey, Leah Korbel, Barbara Rossi

This regularly scheduled July meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission, advertised in the *Observer Tribune* and the *Daily Record* in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act of 1975, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 *et seq.* and posted on the Municipal Building bulletin board and the Township website, was called to order at 7:45 pm by Chairman Stokes.

No members of the press were present.

A quorum was not achieved.

The minutes for May 16 and June 20 were held over for a quorum.

**Applicants:**

Middle Valley Cemetery—commission members should check out the cemetery wall and gate in particular. A Boy Scout is interested in working on the gate area as his Eagle Scout project. The scout was unable to attend tonight and will make a presentation in the future.

Long Valley Presbyterian Parsonage, 46 Schooley's Mountain Road, B25 L47, GVHD—Hank Dougherty of the Presbyterian Church called on June 26 about re-roofing the garage at the Parsonage. The current material is 3-tab asphalt and the proposal is to use the same. Chairman Stokes notified the Building Department and Mr. Dougherty that no COA was needed as this constitutes a repair/replacement under the definitions of the ordinance and as such is exempt, under §217-136 (B) (1), from the need to obtain a COA.

**Old Business:**

Grasser, 6 East Mill, B28 L31, GVHD—demolition of rear shed addition

Correspondence from Building Code Official Neil Ruggiero on June 26 indicated his intention to remove the stop work order and issue a demolition permit based on safety and possible town legal issues and the applicants statement that their insurance company will not renew their policy. The HPC replied June 27 and reiterated its need for a letter from the insurance company and stated "If you feel the issue cannot wait any longer, you must do what is necessary. The HPC agrees that the Township cannot afford the risk exposure."

The HPC did receive on July 13, through the Building Department, a copy of a letter dated April 30, 2012 from the Mercer Insurance Companies stating that "At your request, a recent inspection was conducted" and should be "carefully taken down."

The HPC will indicate in the records that it accepted the forcible demolition of the rear section, which has been variously described as a barn/garage/shed and which was connected to the building and ground floor shop and used as part of the retail space, and which dated to at least the 1930's and which included markings on its interior tongue and groove sheathing of the various highwater flood heights over the years. The building withstood water damage most recently from the multiple fall 2011 storms and years of neglect particularly since unauthorized work began in 1999. Demolition was unfortunate since both the Building Department Code Enforcement Officer and the Zoning Officer indicated a willingness to work with the owner while certain repairs to stabilize the rear wall along the river were done. The building is located within the 300-foot buffer of the river and no future construction will be allowed. The addition, once part of the Hoffman Feed and Grain Store, was the last remnant of a commercial complex that existed in that area from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century from the corner to the Latourette Grist and Saw Mill. In addition to the mill was a bakery, later Hoffman Feed, a blacksmith, the current car

repair which was built as a firehouse and numerous small businesses located in Kice's River Building that included a general store, pool parlor, cobbler and paint shop.

In an April phone conference between Chairman Stokes and Attorney Paula DiBona, the attorney was not satisfied by the descriptive wording used in the German Valley Register Nomination papers that the rear structure was included as part of the "one story rear addition" on the contributing property since there is another one story section between the main part of the building the rear barn area. Chairman Stokes believed the description included both sections, while Attorney DiBona was more comfortable with the single section that includes the loading dock/back deck. The attorney also stated that an argument could not be used favoring retention based on the privacy the building provided for the yard of neighboring property #8 East Mill, whereas Chairman Stokes felt allowing demolition while repair was still feasible, would create an adverse effect on #8.

Green Living Festival Feedback—suggestions were to move date to spring or fall when school clubs could participate or possibly move it to an inside venue depending upon the time of year. This year the inaugural festival was held July 14 in Rock Spring Park. Ed Gagne and Eileen Stokes manned the booth along with the help of Andrew Stokes.

Close Public Hearing—at 8:47pm, after determining that no other HPC member was arriving, Chairman Stokes phoned Commissioner Barbara Rossi who was ill and unable to attend in order to have a quorum vote to close the May16 public hearing on a solar panel roof installation at 5 West Maple, B33 L32, GVHD. No comments favorable or adverse have been received. No members of the public have appeared. The motion was made by Susan Penney to close the public hearing and to accept the resolution to allow the installation as was discussed at the May 16 regularly scheduled meeting. The motion was seconded by Jen Gorini and unanimously passed by: Penney, Gorini, Rossi and Stokes. Notification of the approval will be sent to the Building Department.

German Valley Sidewalk Completion—on July 12, at the request of Township Office Manager Andrew Coppola, Chairman Stokes re-issued an updated letter of support, addressed to the Township Committee, for the expansion and completion of the downtown sidewalks. The first such letter was issued in 2003.

Kansas State Historical Society DVD—Chairman Stokes spoke with Patrick Zollner there about permission to place a link on our webpage to their You Tube videos on the use of two-part epoxy as an acceptable repair technique to water or insect damaged wood. He does not see this as a problem as long as credit to the KSHS is given; however he recommended an official letter of request be sent for the files. The commission reviewed several similar videos before choosing this one.

The two Loudon, Inc. "BrightSide" white reflector u-channel post covers that were ordered from Loudon in Budd Lake for the two Middle Valley Historic District signs have arrived and were picked up by Chairman Stokes and will be delivered to the Road Department for installation.

German Valley Marker & 275 Anniversary Celebration—Denise Niessing of the WT Historical Society appeared to discuss the appropriateness of replacing the worn, flat aluminum, Tercentenary sign located in front of the Zion Lutheran Parish Center, 11 Schooley's Mountain Road, in time for the Township's 275<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2013.

A general discussion covered the fact that the NJSHPO still "owns" the existing sign and has review of the replacement. Chairman Stokes had spoken with Bob Craig at SHPO on 13 November, 2008 about possible replacement and has forwarded notes from that conversation to the applicant. He recommends new text and the retention of the original sign in a nearby

location (Zion? Museum?). Scott Frech, DPW, may be able to make the sign in house. Obtaining the materials for the original color combination might be the major obstacle and expense. He will look into obtaining a partial roll of the correct colors (NJ blue and buff). Denise's goal is to have the sign installed and unveiled in January to kick off the 275<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year activities. Discussion also included whether it would be appropriate to move the sign closer to the stonearch bridge as the recent addition of signs at the end of the Zion driveway due to the new addition and change of traffic pattern has caused a clutter of signs in that small area. The Commission felt the sign could remain on Zion property and be moved closer to the bridge where cars waiting for the traffic light could still read it. The drawback to moving it is the loss of the protective hedge and exposing the sign to roadside damage. The commission felt the applicant should confirm relocation with the SHPO when seeking approval for replacement and word changes.

There was no quorum and no resolution passed; however, the consensus was that it is appropriate to replace the weathered Tercentenary sign currently located in front of 11 Schooley's Mountain Road, preferably in time for the Township's Anniversary.

We agree that retaining and replacing the sign is important, safe depository should be found, and that because of recent sign plethora that the sign may be moved north where it will stay on the Zion property in present place or closer to the bridge, as approved by the SHPO and Morris County Road Department.

The meeting was closed at 9:20.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eileen Stokes

Minutes were approved Sept. 19, 2012. Susan Penney made the motion to accept as presented, with a second by Jennifer Gorini. Ayes: Gorini, Penney, Stokes. Nays: 0. Abstains: Blum, Beute, Forsbrey, Rossi, and Korbel.