

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Westtown Municipal Building, 1039 Wilmington Pike
Tuesday, October 10, 2023 - 7:00 PM

In attendance: Chair Pamela Boulos (PB), and Members David Walter (DW), Dan Campbell (DC), Paul Vartan Sookiasian (PVS), Stephen Wahrhaftig (SW), and Stephen Dabrowski (SD). Absent was Patrick McDonough. Also present were Mila Carter, Assistant Township Manager, and Tom Foster, Township Supervisor.

I. Call to Order:

Pam Boulos called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

II. Approval of Minutes from September 12, 2023 (DW/SW) 5-0

Dave Walter made a motion to adopt the minutes as presented. Stephen Wahrhaftig seconded. All were in favor of the motion.

III. Public Comment (Non-agenda items)

None.

IV. New Business

1. East Bradford Historic Preservation Ordinance

Andrea Campisi, Director of Planning and Zoning at East Bradford Township, provided an overview of the Township's historic preservation ordinance, its applicability to historic resources and administrative process. The HC members asked her specific questions related to guidelines and best practices at reviewing applications and providing recommendations. She also talked about the importance of historic classifications and recognizing that some situations might be challenging to resolve due to the unwillingness of the property owner. Ms. Carter asked whether the site visits are a part of the review process. Ms. Campisi explained that only in the situations where it might be needed and notification to the owner. Ms. Campisi asked whether the HC was aware of the Certified Local Government (CLG) program that enables municipalities to receive additional grant funding for preservation related initiatives and provides free design services and technical assistance among other benefits.

2. East Bradford Design Guidelines for Historic Preservation

Ms. Campisi also summarized the development and administration of the design guidelines to assist property owners, the Historical Commission, and the Historic and Architectural Review Board (HARB) in the protection of the historical character of the township.

V. Old Business

1. Ordinance Amendments - Historic Resources

The HC continued the discussion on the draft amendments to the ordinance, which they felt were advisory in nature and would not place undue burdens on property owners, but could provide benefits for staying in compliance with the

structure's historic status.

2. Community Engagement

A. Westtown Day Recap

Ms. Boulos recapped the event, organized activities and overall participation. Mr. Wahrhaftig expressed his disappointment with the lack of signage describing activities at the event and suggested being better prepared in the future. He raised a question about the role of the Historical Commission participation and proposed having a table at the event to showcase the HC's initiatives and display a map of historic resources to educate and foster better engagement with the public. The HC were in support of his suggestions.

B. History Lectures

Stephen Wahrhaftig said that the first free history lecture for the public would take place on Saturday, November 4, 2023 at 10am. Ms. Carter asked about expected attendance and whether it was envisioned to be available for virtual attendance and live streamed on YouTube. Mr. Wahrhaftig expected between 20 and 30 attendees and confirmed that virtual attendance is encouraged as well.

3. America250PA- Chester County

The HC continued its discussion on proposed activities for the celebration within the Township and raised a question about potential theme and branding. All agreed that Oakbourne Mansion shall be utilized somehow.

4. Community Education

A. Historic Markers

Ms. Carter reported that she contacted the principal of the Sarah Starkweather Elementary School to gauge the interest in placing the marker commemorating Sarah Starkweather on the school's property. She suggested for the HC to work on the site plan showing potential locations and draft language for the marker.

B. Newsletter Articles

Ms. Carter asked whether the HC was going to provide an article for the next issue of the Gazette. Ms. Boulos volunteered to complete the article on serpentine stone or Sarah Starkweather. She noted that she completed background research and has some outstanding items to clarify prior to doing so.

VI. Public Comment (All Topics)

None.

VII. Announcements

1. Ms. Carter announced that the ZHB application for 1131 S Chester Road for

special exception for sole practitioners' medical office to occupy the lower level of the house has been approved.

2. Ms. Carter further announced that the next conditional use hearing for the Stokes Estate Flexible Development has been scheduled for October 24, 2023 at 7pm.

VIII. Adjournment (SW/SD) 6-0

Stephen Wahrhaftig made a motion to adjourn at 8:54 pm. Stephen Dabrowski seconded. All were in favor of the motion.

Next HC meeting: **November 14, 2023 @ 7:00 pm**

HC Representative at next Board of Supervisors Meeting:

- **Monday, November 6, 2023 @ 7:30 pm** – Stephen Wahrhaftig

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Vartan Sookiasian
Historical Commission Secretary

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