

# WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Westtown Municipal Building, 1039 Wilmington Pike  
Tuesday, April 9, 2024 - 7:00 PM

In attendance: Chair Pamela Boulos (PB), and Members David Walter (DW), Dan Campbell (DC), Stephen Wahrhaftig (SW). Absent was Patrick McDonough. Also present was Mila Carter, Assistant Township Manager.

## **Call to Order**

Pam Boulos called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm. She asked about the appointment of the Commission's Secretary. Stephen Wahrhaftig volunteered to take meeting minutes for the meeting.

## **Adoption of Agenda (SW/DC) 4-0**

Stephen Wahrhaftig made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Dan Campbell seconded. All were in favor of the motion.

## **Approval of Minutes from both February 13, 2024 and March 12, 2024 (PB/DW) 4-0**

Pam Boulos made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from February 13, 2024 and March 12, 2024. Dave Walter seconded. All were in favor of the motion.

## **Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items)**

None.

## **Old Business**

### **1. Historic Preservation Ordinance**

Mila Carter summarized a list of discussion points that the Township solicitor had raised to the Board in response to the proposed draft amendments to the Historic Preservation ordinance. She suggested to review those in preparation for the future meeting of the HC with the solicitor. The list included inconsistencies of proposed language with existing Code, extension timeline for building permit reviews, clarification of uses to be permitted via special exception versus conditional use, clarity on the use of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, regulations of "objects", and verification whether the historic resources list versus map are to be regulated. Ms. Carter provided details on the subject of conditional use and special exception and pointed out that in some cases, special exceptions requests can be more efficient and cost effective for the applicant. She also brought up that denying a permit application is more streamlined than placing a permit on hold. There was a thorough discussion of the term 'objects' used in the ordinance. Ms. Carter explained that the solicitor raised a question about how these objects are addressed on the historic resources map or a list. She also suggested that more details about the historical properties are helpful in decisions regarding proposed building changes. Ms. Carter further asked for a feedback whether the Commission intended to regulate the map or the list and provided an overview of the types of structures and sites included in the current list. The Commission discussed the need to update the current list, as well as the possibility of seeking a grant to conduct historical surveys.

### **2. Historic Marker – Huey Ruins**

Dave Walter recapped that the proposed marker for the Huey Ruins site had been approved by the Board at their April 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. He updated the Commission that the order had been placed from a studio in Ohio. He expected the marker to be delivered by September 2024. Mr. Walter suggested for the Township Public Works to weigh in on the final marker placement to ensure no obstruction is required at the intersection. The Commission discussed the possibility of a public dedication of the marker once it is installed. Pam Boulos noted that she got a response from West Chester University (WCU) regarding the status of the artefacts from the previous excavation work. She explained that the WCU is prepared to return them to the Township, and offered to have students help with the curation of collected items. There was a discussion on where these artifacts could be housed. Mila Carter suggested to consider purchasing a glass case to use in the township building to display the collection. Pam Boulos assured to follow up with the school on the offer.

### **3. History Lectures**

Mila Carter recapped that the Stokes Hall will be prepared for the upcoming lecture with live streaming capabilities, display of Westtown history books for sale and chairs set up facing the screen. She asked whether any other assistance was needed. Dave Walter wanted to ensure that the speaker would be provided with an honorarium as agreed by the Board. Ms. Carter confirmed.

## **New Business**

### **1. Westtown Day 2024**

The Commission discussed the need to emphasize township history at this year's event. The proposed activities include a booth for the Historical Commission and availability of the Westtown history book for sale. There was a discussion to continue utilizing the boards with pictures that were previously created. Stephen Wahrhaftig suggested to have one or more tours of the Oakbourne Mansion grounds to be given to visitors during the event. Mila Carter suggested to have some sort of contest to draw visitors in and to participate in voting. She thought that maybe asking residents to provide a photo of their springhouses. The Commission thought it was a good idea to explore. Pam Boulos suggested to consider another Historical Preservation Award. She noted that requests for submissions shall take place soon with a timeline of end of July.

### **2. Westtown250**

Stephen Wahrhaftig provided an update on the recent America250 meeting led by the Chester County and the Board's feedback that he received at the Board of Supervisors meeting. He recapped that the Board asked the Commission what is the goal for Westtown and which steps are needed to be taken to achieve that goal. Mr. Wahrhaftig suggested two possible locations in Westtown to focus planned activities on: Oakbourne Mansion and Darlington's Corner at the future Crebilly Farm. He encouraged the Commission to start planning early. Mila Carter suggested to provide a written proposal to the Board and think about budgeting for those potential events.

### **3. Oral History Project**

Stephen Wahrhaftig proposed to reach out and interview the Robinson family about the history of Crebilly. He noted that the family was known for having a collection of historic coaches. Mila Carter suggested to have a list of potential questions and offered to reach out to the Robinsons. Mr. Wahrhaftig would provide a list.

### **4. Chester County Historic Preservation Network (CCHPN) Event – Recap**

Stephen Wahrhaftig has covered the agenda item during the discussion of Westtown250 agenda item. Dan Campbell mentioned that there is a call for award nominations and suggested to nominate the group that advocated for the Crebilly land acquisition for the award. The Commission members expressed some reservations about such nomination.

**Public Comment - All Topics**

None.

**Announcements**

1. Mila Carter informed the Commission that the former Abbey Green property located along Route 202 is proposed to be utilized as an office and showroom for fence related products. She noted that a new tenant does not plan on going through land development process at this time, therefore, there does not appear to be any current threat of demolition of the existing house listed on the Westtown Township Historical Resources Map.

**Adjournment (SW/DC) 4-0**

Stephen Wahrhaftig made a motion to adjourn at 8:46 pm. Dan Campbell seconded. All were in favor of the motion.

Next HC meeting: May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024 @ 7:00 pm

HC Representative at next Board of Supervisors Meeting:

- **Monday May 6, 2024 @ 7:30 pm** – Dan Campbell/Steven Wahrhaftig

Respectfully submitted,  
Stephen Wahrhaftig  
Historical Commission Acting Secretary