

WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Westtown Municipal Building, 1039 Wilmington Pike
Tuesday, November 12, 2024 - 7:00 PM

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

Call to Order

Pam Boulos called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Adoption of Agenda (SW/DW) 5-0

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

Approval of Minutes from September 10, 2024 and October 8, 2024

Pam Boulos proposed to table the meeting minutes until the next meeting. The Commission agreed.

Public Comment (Non-agenda items)

Christine Gunsauillus, 2204 Leeds Court, reintroduced herself and announced that she was interested in the position on the Commission.

Phil Tripp, 8 Oakbourne Road, stated that he was interested in learning more about the America250 celebration activities and would like to volunteer for those if needed.

Old Business

1. America 250 in Westtown – Next Steps

Pam Boulos reported that there was low attendance at the initial public meeting to talk about America250 efforts. Steve Wahrhaftig recapped that he attended the latest Board meeting to ensure the budget is approved for the initiative and noted that the Board was in favor of a separate \$2,500 budget line item dedicated to Westtown250. Mr. Wahrhaftig reported the discussion with the Board that included a suggestion to form a steering committee involving members from the Board and the other committees and the next steps in seeking volunteers from various groups such as the Rotary Club, the Scouts, religious institutions and residents. He recommended coming up with an outline to educate the committee about the ongoing County-wide efforts, their role and to suggest some specifics. He mentioned that he spoke with the Rotary club representative and invited him to participate. Steve also suggested to invite Westtown School to participate in the lecture series and planning for America250. He suggested for the next step to be a meeting for the members of the steering groups, which could be in person, or virtual. Pam suggested to have a meeting in January.

Dave Walter asked about specific activities for Westtown. Steve recapped that at the joint Chester County and Delaware County meeting there was a discussion about a yearlong

celebration with parades, fireworks and incorporation of 250th into the other already planned events such as Dare to Declare. He also mentioned that there are funding opportunities for interpretive signage and other permanent displays. Pat McDonough recapped that he previously suggested signs in resident's yards. Dan Campbell noted that all events in other communities are posted on the County's America250 dedicated website. He also reminded that the County organizes monthly meetings for ongoing discussions.

2. Huey Ruins Artifacts

Pam Boulos reported that an intern from West Chester University (WCU) will be working on setting up the display with artifacts found at the Huey Ruins site. She noted that Dr. Wholey asked for agreement to be sign prior to the spring semester to get the process started.

3. Oral History Project – Update

Steve recapped that the interview with Jim Lees has been edited and will be uploaded to the YouTube and shared on social media accounts soon after Township review and approval. He noted that he was compiling a list of additional people to interview, such as the owner of former Pete's Produce. He explained that he was planning on meeting with the Township to explain how the channel has to function, vision for sub channels with various purposes, which is on hold until after the holidays.

New Business

1. Recap of History Lecture 2024 Series and Plan for 2025

Steven reported that the lecture on Darlington Inn was well attended. The Commission discussed ideas for next year. Steven proposed to write about America250 to share in the newsletter and social media, and to contact churches and other organizations to come and talk about various events. He also suggested to write about Lenape, arrowhead found at the Huey site, blacksmith shop, America as it was 250 years ago, William Penn's vision for development of the area, growing of Lima Beans and trains and planes of Westtown. Pam suggested contacting Westtown School for potential lecture in April, May or June. Pam suggested to have two lectures in spring and two in the fall. She asked who else can be invited to provide a lecture. Steve wondered whether David Robinson might be interested in the lecture about Crebilly. The Commission discussed the potential lecture dates for 2024 and settled on April 5, June 7, September 20 and November 8. Steve volunteered to provide a write up about the lectures for the gazette.

Steven provided other ideas such as secrets of Westtown, Westtown Lake, ghost marker, and movie at the mansion, water tower as an observation tower, Westtown observatory, and pictures of artifacts. He also asked whether there was an interest in writing about prisoners of Westtown as another subject and camp Elder. Dave Walter was not sure there was enough material on that subject matter and questioned its relevance to Westtown. He suggested such subjects as History of West Chester, Amish workers on railroad (Duffers cut story) at Malvern, and History of Crebilly farm.

2. 2025 Priorities

Steven shared that the Board is considering subdividing and selling Darlington Inn. He added that it is unknown whether a façade easement will be considered or the building is to be demolished. Steven wanted to know more about the future plans for the inn. Steven felt it was important for the Commission to tour the inn and take photos to preserve the memories of it. He also suggested to raise concerns to the Board and asked to be involved in the dialogue about the future. Pat asked about access to Crebilly buildings on other lots. He wondered whether it was possible.

Pat McDonough would like to see the amendments to the historic preservation ordinance to be finalized. He stressed the importance of the ordinance in fact of two historic buildings, Stokes home and Darlington Inn, being in danger of disappearing. He also suggested to come up with the proposal from the Commission and stressed the importance of façade easement as an opportunity to preserve the building. Dave Walter wanted to see public's feedback on the future of the inn.

Pat made other suggestions, including a more comprehensive assessment of historic resources. Steven noted that there were grants for such efforts and agreed that it was important to keep the inventory up to date. Dave Walter suggested to complete an update of history book in time for America 250th celebration. Steven noted that he had some ideas to formatting of the book and thought that providing an index was important to be able to find specific information. He also noted that there was a lot of repetition and information that needed to be clarified.

The Commission agreed to focus on ordinance amendments adoption, detailed assessment of historic resources, America250 activities, update to Westtown History book, and continue with history lectures and participation at Westtown Day.

3. Newsletter Gazette Articles

Pam reminded that she wanted to finish up an article on Sarah Starkweather. She noted that many ideas for history lectures can be turned into future articles.

4. Historic Resources Inventory Update

Steven repeated that there are grants available for updating the inventory. He felt that it was important to gather detailed information that is currently lacking in the database, including background history of a particular building/structure/place, building materials, architectural style, estimated built and photos. He thought that it could be accomplished with the grant. Dan mentioned Save America's Treasures grant program administrated by the National Park Service. Dave suggested to look into potential grants for the preservation of Darlington Inn.

5. Recap of the Chester County Historic Presentation Network (CCHPN) Fall Workshop

Dan provided a recap of the workshop, which was focused primarily on fundraising.

Public Comment (All Topics)

Announcements

1. Dave announced that he would give a talk on the history of Westtown at Westminster Presbyterian.
2. Mila announced that the Township received the Zoning Hearing Board application for the property at 301 E Pleasant Grove Road that is included on the historic resources inventory.

Adjournment (DC/SW) 4-0

Dan made a motion to adjourn at 9:15 pm. Steven seconded. All were in favor of the motion.

Next HC meeting: **December 10, 2024 @ 7:00 PM**

HC Representative at next Board of Supervisors Meeting:

- **Monday December 2 @ 7:30 PM** – Pamela Boulos/Dave Walter

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick S. McDonough, AIA NCARB
Historical Commission Acting Secretary