

**Franklin Township
Historical Commission and
Historical Architectural Review Board
Combined Hybrid Meeting**

Tuesday, January 10, 2023

Minutes

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 PM by Paul Lagassé. Also present were Sally Gallagher and Sara Beth Kohut (HC members), Kathy Goin (incoming HARB member), and Nan Latimer, Lou Mandich, and Chuck Phillips (HC and HARB). Crystal Crampton, vice chair of the Pennsylvania Hallowed Grounds Project, and Township Operations Manager Jeff Eastburn also were present.

II. Organization of the Historical Commission – Election of Officers

Mr. Lagassé, nominated by Mr. Phillips and seconded by Mr. Mandich, was elected chair of the Historical Commission. Ms. Latimer, nominated by Mr. Lagassé and seconded by Mr. Mandich, was elected vice chair, and Ms. Kohut, nominated by Mr. Lagassé and seconded by Mr. Mandich, was elected secretary.

III. Organization of the HARB – Election of Officers

Mr. Lagassé, nominated by Mr. Mandich and seconded by Mr. Phillips, was elected chair of the HARB, and Mr. Mandich, nominated by Mr. Lagassé and seconded by Mr. Phillips, was elected vice chair. The post of secretary was left open, with Mr. Lagassé as acting secretary.

IV. Public Comment

There was none.

V. Approval of Prior Minutes

A. The minutes of the HC-HARB meeting of November 1, 2022, were unanimously approved on the motion of Mr. Mandich, seconded by Mr. Phillips.

B. The minutes of the HARB special meeting of November 28, 2022, were unanimously approved on the motion of Mr. Mandich, seconded by Mr. Phillips.

VI. Old Business

A. Updating Historic Resource Surveys and PHMC Data from Map – Continuing Topic

There was nothing to report.

B. Church Hill African Church Cemetery – Continuing Topic

Crystal Crampton, who also is the historian for the UAME Church conference and the steward of Bucktoe Cemetery in Kennett, thanked the members of the Historical Commission for their work with the African Union Church Cemetery and for making the UAME Church aware of its existence. There was a wide ranging discussion of what the HC members and Jonathan Hoppe (on Find a Grave) had found, and how a renovation of the cemetery might proceed and whether grants might be sought. She would like to work with the Historical Commission to develop a plan for improving the condition of the cemetery, and she and the HC agreed to try to schedule a planning meeting for late January or early February that would include a visit to the cemetery and followup discussions at Galilee UAME Church in Avondale. At that meeting, the HC would also look to transfer the information it has collected on the cemetery and its burials to her and the members of Galilee.

C. Other Township Cemeteries – Continuing Topic

Mr. Lagassé reported that a resident of London Britain had volunteered to mow Flint Hill Cemetery.

Mr. Lagassé reported on the scanning of the record book of the Mt. Olivet Church and noted that the resulting document with prefatory matter had been distributed via emailed links and would be posted online. The current document is quite large in terms of file size, as it has more than 100 scans. Mr. Phillips offered to make a PDF version that had a smaller file size, and during the meeting returned a file that was 10 MB, instead of 40 MB, to Mr. Lagassé. Mr. Lagassé hopes to make a high resolution copy of the book in the future, and also needs to make improved scans of a few pages and eventually make a transcript of the book.

Later in the meeting, Mr. Lagassé asked Ms. Kohut if she would be interested in reviewing the prefatory matter to the Mt. Olivet record book and seeing if there was additional information about the Christian Church, or Plummerites, that could be added to it, and she agreed. Mr. Lagassé will provide her with the material he has collected so far.

D. Mason-Dixon/Arc Corner Connectivity Project – Continuing Topic

Mr. Lagassé reported that London Britain Twp is in the process of arranging for the project's first meeting; the grant has been awarded.

E. 896 Roadwork & a Walkable Kemblesville – Continuing Topic

Mr. Lagassé noted that the Planning Commission is involved in work that it hopes will lead to the identification of areas where pedestrian access is difficult, and that he expected that the village will be recognized as one of the problem areas, though the solutions may be unclear. Mr. Phillips, who is a member of the PC and involved in that work, noted that he would be raising the situation of the village in the discussion.

Ms. Kohut reported that PennDOT's monetary offers for the taking of property are being sent to residents, and that the new right of way is marked by pink flags.

F. Raising Awareness of Kemblesville & Franklin History – Continuing Topic

Ms. Kohut asked whether doing a Town Tour or Village Walk might be something the HC might sponsor. Mr. Lagassé said he felt that the logistics of hosting and managing traffic concern him; he mentioned Kemblesville as a location with traffic problem. A hiking tour of ruins in Big Elk Creek State Park might work, but he did not believe that the HC has enough information to write scripts for a worthwhile hiking tour. He believes that it would take a couple of years of research and planning. Ms. Latimer wondered if an agricultural tour might be a possibility, but noted that the Hocking Farm was the only Century Farm she was aware of, and noted that to her knowledge local farms were not well documented in photographs. Mr. Lagassé said that the pictures of the farm that the Hockings had shared with the Township in conjunction with Mrs. Hocking's oral history interview mostly dated from no earlier than the 1960s. Ms. Kohut suggested doing a talk about township history that would be intended to give information that could be used by attendees to view some of the sites on their own; she also suggested using aerial photographs. She offered to look into the topic to see what might be developed.

G. HC Website – Continuing Topic

The Mt. Olivet Record Book will be posted by Mr. Lagassé on the website.

H. Township History – Constructing a More Detailed History – Continuing Topic

Nothing was reported or discussed.

I. Talks and Training – Continuing Topic

The Oxford Area Historical Association will have a talk on "Oxford in the Civil War" via its Facebook page on January 26th at 7 PM. On March 9, at 7 PM, in New London at the Township Building, Karen Marshall will speak about the book she is writing on her discovery after her father's death of the details of his service in World War II. This talk is cosponsored by the HC and the New London Area Historical Society.

Ms. Kohut noted that 1723 was the year in which Franklin became, as part of New London, a municipality, and asked if there were any plans to commemorate the event.

Mr. Lagassé said he was not aware of anything planned in Franklin or New London; Ms. Kohut said it would be something worth considering. Mr. Lagassé noted that the 250th anniversary of the American Independence would be in 2026, and said that the county was considering planning events commemorating it.

Ms. Gallagher noted that Joe Marvel, who lived in the house that Paul Overton now owns, was an avid artifact collector, and suggested that such artifacts and where and how they were collected might form the basis of a talk. There was a discussion about the range of his collecting and whom he collected with. Ms. Gallagher mentioned that she had a newspaper clipping on Mr. Marvel, and Mr. Lagassé said that he would like to scan that article.

J. Revisions to the Historic District Ordinance

Mr. Lagassé reported that the supervisors had referred the proposed revisions to the Solicitor for review and comment.

VII. New Business

A. HARB Meeting in February for 3327 Appleton Road COA Application

Mr. Lagassé noted that the Township had received an application for demolition of the house on the property, and that a HARB meeting would be held in February to review the application.

B. New Zoning Officer

Mr. Lagassé also reported that he had met with the new Zoning Officer, Mark Gordon, and discussed the Historic District and HARB with him, and subsequently sent him copies of the COA application form, the Historic Resource Survey form for the Historic District, and links to the most pertinent sections of the Township code.

VIII. Public Comment

There was none.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Approved May 2, 2023