

Lower Gwynedd Historic Advisory Committee
Regular Meeting
April 20, 2023

Committee Members Present

Matt Metcalf
Gloria Jones
Joseph Langella
Fawn Ostriak
Linda Sacks
Michael Brockway

Committee Members Absent

Allison Klinger

Supervisors Present

Janine Martin

Lower Gwynedd Staff

Michelle Farzetta (not present) Took minutes from recording

Call to order

The hybrid meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. at the Lower Gwynedd Township building.
Roll call was taken.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Metcalf asked for a motion to approve the March 16, 2023 minutes. Ms. Jones stated she did not receive the minutes. Mr. Langella made a motion. Seconded by Mr. Metcalf. Motion passed 5-0-1. (Ms. Jones abstained, as she did not see the minutes)

Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Written Communication

There was an active discussion regarding the April Facebook post regarding Historic Penllyn Village. There was a comment, that is no longer able to be viewed, accusing the township of whitewashing the segregated school that is no longer able to be viewed, even though Facebook states there is one comment. There were questions regarding who does the posting, as well as if the comment was taken down or hidden by the township. Ms. Martin stated she would

inquire with staff regarding how Facebook postings were handled. Township policy is not to alter social media posts.

Audience Participation

There was no audience participation.

Board of Supervisors - Liaison Report

Ms. Martin gave an update regarding the Owen Evans Property. She stated that the property already contains five lots, however the developer is looking to build ten. There are limitations as to what the developer is permitted to do under ordinances within the township. There have not been any additional plans submitted.

Mr. Metcalf asked for an update on the comprehensive plan and asked Ms. Martin if historic preservation would be a part of the plan and if she knew what information they would need to supply to the comp plan committee. Ms. Martin was unsure at the time, but would get some information for the next meeting.

Monitoring of Historic Properties

- **The Owen Evans Property, 1348 Sumneytown Pike** - The Wissahickon Historical Society and Matt Metcalf took a tour of the property with Jane Douglas, the Relator for the property. The house needs some repair, but it is not excessive. There is also an addition that was started, but never completed. Mr. Brockway mentioned that he contacted the Audubon Society regarding the Owen Evans Property. He has not heard back yet, therefore will provide an update once he receives any communication.
- **Penllyn Village** – Ms. Jones gave a presentation about the history of Penllyn Village. She spoke of the school field, the area around the Penllyn School on Gwynedd Avenue. It was the equivalent of a Town Square. It is the only area the African Americans had to socialize. Ms. Jones spoke of the day to day and how the residents raised money by having a carnival to pay for streetlights. She also mentioned how the first YMCA was started in the Penllyn School, before it was torn down. Ms. Jones spoke about Penllyn Woods and how the residents all came together to make it what it is today.

Mr. Metcalf then spoke of the document he provided prior to the meeting regarding Historic Districts. He spoke about how the national register and how the local historic district can be implemented as a preservation tool. These registers can be used independently or together to reach the end goal of preserving a community's historic resources. Mr. Metcalf recommended making a recommendation to start a recognition effort to make Penllyn a non-regulatory National Register District. Ms. Jones made a motion, seconded by Mr. Langella to move forward with a district nomination for Penllyn. Motion passed 6-0.

Old Business

- **Preservation Easement Template Request** – Mr. Metcalf read a memo he drafted regarding a template for Preservation and Conservation Easements. Ms. Martin asked what kind of action he is looking for from the Board of Supervisors. Is he looking to draft his own template or have Neil Stein, township solicitor, create a template? Mr. Metcalf responded that he would be happy to work with Mr. Stein. Then once the template is complete the Historic Committee can review it and make the recommendation to the BOS for approval.
- **Gwynedd School/McCormick House Discussion and Recommendation(s)** – The Park and Recreation Board is asking for a recommendation regarding the Gwynedd School, as it is on the property of Ingersoll Park, which is set to be renovated. After a discussion regarding the building's history, it was determined that there was not enough information to recommend preserving it for specific historic reasons and that it would be best to use the date and name stone from the building in an interpretive exhibit near a playground or tot lot in its place. It will also be recommended to put up some signage to identify what used to be there and a set of architectural photos to document the building if it is removed. Mr. Metcalf made a motion, seconded by Ms. Sacks. Motion passed 6-0.
- **Historical Markers Framework** – Mr. Metcalf reviewed from the March meeting the draft on the framework for the historical marker program for the township. No one had any objections or recommended changes. Ms. Martin asked what the process would be for people to apply. Mr. Metcalf stated that the Historic Committee would review the application and then the BOS would approve it. They approved a motion 6-0 to make a recommendation to the BOS to approve the Historical Marker Framework.

New Business

There was no new business.

Announcements

There were no announcements. Mr. Metcalf said he would send an invitation to a webinar called "Planning, Preservation & Change: How Planning and Preservation Can Work Together to Create Great Places" on April 26th to township staff to distribute to relevant parties in township administration. The description of the webinar was as follows: "Planners shape and manage community change. Preservationists connect important stories, memories, and places to our communities. The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the American Planning Association Urban Design and Preservation Division have joined together to explore planning and preservation issues and opportunities presented by future change at two webcasts this Spring. On April 26, join a panel of preservation planners and planning directors to hear how preservation considerations are incorporated into their community planning efforts and project

review work. The seasoned planners will discuss how preservation principles can be integrated in their efforts to balance growth while preserving community character and the opportunities and challenges that presents. The panel will provide preservations tips about best practices on how to work more effectively within the planning framework."

Adjournment

Mr. Metcalf made a motion to adjourn at 8:21 pm. Motion passed 6-0.