

Lower Gwynedd Historic Advisory Committee
Regular Meeting
May 18, 2023

Committee Members Present

Matt Metcalf
Gloria Jones
Joseph Langella
Michael Brockway
Allison Klinger

Committee Members Absent

Fawn Ostriak
Linda Sacks

Supervisors Present

Janine Martin
Danielle Duckett
Mike Twersky

Lower Gwynedd Staff

Michelle Farzetta (not present) Took minutes from recording.

Call to order

The hybrid meeting was called to order at 6:07 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 April 20, 2023, minutes. Motion passed 5-0-0.

Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Written Communication

There was no written communication.

Audience Participation

Reverend Charles Quann, from Bethlehem Baptist Church spoke in support of the historical markers program. He would like to see a marker for Bethlehem Baptist Church, a major fixture

in LGT's Black community for 135 years this October. He discussed the history of the church and its current contributions to the community.

Board of Supervisors - Liaison Report

Janine offered information about the items under old business, but held off until that part of the agenda to discuss.

Monitoring of Historic Properties

Mr. Langella asked Mr. Brockway if he had an update on his communication with the Audubon Society regarding Owen Evan's property. Mr. Brockway did not have any information to share at this time. Mr. Langella stated he is planning on contacting the owner of the property to see if there were any artifacts, they would like to share with the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society (WVHS)

Old Business

- **Historical Markers: Submission Worksheet, Process for Submissions** – Ms. Martin confirmed that Neil Stein, township solicitor reviewed the information and would like an ordinance stating the policies and procedures being adopted. Ms. Martin explained the process and is hoping to have it completed and approved at the June 27, 2023, Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting. Mr. Metcalf asked if there should be wording regarding the BOS being able to repeal a marker in later years. Ms. Martin stated she would mention this to Mr. Stein.

There was a discussion regarding the information to collect from an applicant when they are submitting a request for a historical marker. It was agreed that they would need to know if it was a person or place, the dates making it historical, an explanation of its importance and some kind of research or references verifying its importance in history. It was agreed that the explanation should be about 300 words. It would also need to be known, if applicable, whether the property owner is aware of the request, as well as where the marker should be located.

The process for submission would be the application goes to the Historic Committee>Review application >approve or evaluate>60 days to resubmit if more information or revisions are requested. It was also suggested to offer an extension should it be needed.

- **Easement Template** – Ms. Martin stated that Mr. Stein felt this would be a great resource for residents, but we need to be careful, as we are not lawyers, so are not permitted to give legal advice. The templates can be offered to the resident selling. It is a great way to empower residents to preserve their historic properties directly and through legal means. Ms. Martin will confirm with Mr. Stein the best way to make these available. The Committee will review the templates at next month's meeting and make a recommendation to the BOS at that time.

New Business

- **Co-sponsored Speaker Event with Wissahickon Valley Historical Society** – The WVHS has asked us to partner with them for their speaker series. After some discussion it was agreed that we are interested in working with the WVHS to co-sponsor these events. Mr. Langella is going to speak with the WVHS board to update them and will come to the next meeting with a follow-up. Mr. Metcalf inquired about how to acquire funds for the speaker series. Ms. Duckett told him to write a memo with the request, purpose, cost, and value.
- **Old Bethlehem Pike Bridge**- Mr. Metcalf spoke of the history of the bridge behind the township building. It was built in the 1730's and is being removed and replaced with grant funding the township has received. He would like to have some form of formal documentation conducted of the bridge including photos and/or drawings. Some members suggested some kind of marker to indicate the history of the bridge. Ms. Duckett explained that the bridge has failed inspection several times, so this project must be completed as it cannot longer support large vehicles such as EMS vehicles, trash trucks, etc. It is a health and safety issue at this point. There were questions regarding possibly using some of the stone from the bridge in the new one and if it would be possible to see the design. Ms. Martin explained that she spoke with Mr. Hersh, from Gilmore, and the new bridge had already been designed and adding any stone to it would add to the cost of the bridge. The state has requirements that must be met, and we need to follow those requirements. She is unsure any changes could be made at this point. Ms. Martin will do some investigating to see to what degree the bridge can be made to feel historic.
- **Historic Preservation Component of Comprehensive Plan** – Mr. Metcalf asked if there were any updates on the Comp plan as it correlates to the preservation and the Historical Committee. He is hoping to see it correlated with both the state and county plans. Ms. Martin replied that there are monthly meetings. Currently they are working on developing the Beacon properties first. The plan will be developed over a three-year process. There will be opportunities for the public to weigh in. Mr. Metcalf also distributed copies of the Montgomery County 2040 plan highlighting sections relevant to preservation of historic properties and referenced the historic component of the state's comprehensive plan.
- **National Historic Register District: Penllyn Village** – This item was tabled due to time.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Adjournment

Mr. Metcalf made a motion, seconded by Ms. Klinger to adjourn at 8:04 pm. Motion passed 5-0.

