

**MINUTES
OF THE
CRANBURY TOWNSHIP
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
CRANBURY, NEW JERSEY
MIDDLESEX COUNTY**

TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING

A meeting of the Cranbury Township Historic Preservation Commission was held in second level meeting room, Town Hall, Cranbury, New Jersey, on February 18, 2020 beginning at 7:00 pm.

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Pursuant to the Sunshine Law, adequate notice in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-5) was provided on December 16, 2019, of this meeting's date, time, place and an agenda was mailed to the news media, posted on the Township bulletin board, mailed to those requesting personal notice and filed with the Municipal Clerk.

CALL TO ORDER

With a quorum present, Mr. Walsh called the meeting to order, and Ms. Scott performed as recording secretary.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. Banks (1st Alt.), Mr. Golisano, Ms. Marlowe, Ms. Ryan, Mr. Szabo, Ms. Suttmeier (2nd Alt.), and Mr. Walsh. Ms. Spann, HPC Liaison, was present.

APPLICATIONS

HPC 044-20, #82 North Main Street, (B29, L7) within Historic District; Mr. Matt Scott was present to discuss the details of the small outbuilding renovation project. Mr. Scott stated that he is working on the small outbuilding, located near the front of his property on North Main Street. This building's past history was an insurance office. The building is one story, measures 16'Wx 32'L and had a plywood floor that was installed over cinderblocks. The rotting plywood floor was removed and a concrete slab was poured. Mr. Scott states the clapboard and other details, including the gingerbread decorative trim will be reinstalled as it previously was. The front door will remain but the side door will be replaced with like. The roof and the small front overhang roof will remain. The building is not square and is sagging in the middle of the side walls. Due to the sag, the windows no longer lift and some of the glass panes are cracked or missing. Mr. Walsh asked about back of the structure (east elev.) and if it was removed to facilitate the pouring of the concrete. Mr. Scott stated he removed the back side due to the condition of the materials which 'gave' when pushed upon. He would like to install French doors on the back elevation since they would not be visible from the street. Mr. Walsh asked if clapboard siding will be used around the French doors and if the intention of any replacement windows is to be as close as possible to the existing? Mr. Scott agreed and asked HPC for guidance on the windows. Mr. Szabo stated the most important window is the front window visible from the street. HPC stated replacement windows would be more expensive than repairing the existing older windows which can be stabilized. Mr. Scott stated that the window frames were rotted, not the window sashes. Therefore, the window sashes could be repaired and reglazed and reinstalled in new window frames. Discussion ensued about windows, stabilize/repairs to rebuild the window frames by a contractor, the sash, the muntins, and to replace and re-glaze the glass panes. Interior storm windows were also discussed.

Mr. Scott stated that he would like to illuminate the side of the structure with recessed, flush mount under the soffit, with approximately 3"-5" LED point lights. HPC was fine with this idea but alerted him of using an LED lightbulb in a warm white color range.

Mr. Walsh recommended that should Mr. Scott go in another direction on the windows, which is not consistent as discussed, the HPC would like the opportunity to review the selected and preferred option. HPC is pleased that the clapboard is being reinstalled, the decorative trim, and the windows are being addressed.

Hearing no other questions or concerns, roll call to approve the application with the recommendation regarding the windows as stated above was taken. AYES: Mr. Golisano, Ms. Marlowe, Ms. Ryan, Mr. Szabo, and Mr. Walsh. INELIGIBLE: Mr. Banks and Ms. Suttmeier.

HPC045-20, #77 North Main Street, (B23, L42.01) within Historic District; Solar panel representative, Mr. Jason King, was present and spoke of the proposed solar panel project. He informed the HPC that installation of the panels was designed not to be on the front of the house. PSE&G needs to grant approval of this project due to a discounted electrical rate from the grid. Mr. Walsh verified that the panel cells will face south, north and west, and not mounted on the front east elevation. Mr. King confirmed. Mr. Walsh asked about the flush mount but contract states no more than 10" above the roof line. Mr. King stated that there are two ways to mount photovoltaic systems rail systems. He elaborated on one system and explained the system for this project. It is called 'flush mount' since the solar panels will be mounted to the roof using a framing system called the rock-it system. The mounting feet are spaced and staggered to evenly distribute the load on the roof. There is a 3" clearance between the roof and panels. Trim is installed so the space between the panels and roof cannot be seen, giving the appearance that it is meant to be there. Mr. Walsh asked about the current electrical box and installation of the additional panel boxes. Mr. King stated an inverter box approximately 1½'H x 1'L x 10"D will be mounted near the window on the north elevation of house. The meter will have a conduit running from the electric meter over to the inverter box. Mr. Golisano asked about the AC disconnect box. Mr. King stated this is a separate box for fire regulations. Mr. Szabo asked of the box location installed on the house. Mr. King responded on the side since the electrical meter is on the front, and the AC disconnect box has to be within 10' of the main electric service panel. There are no requirements for this to be off the ground since this area is not in the flood zone. Mr. King said that the closer to the electrical box, the cleaner all the boxes appear together. Discussion ensued of mounting the boxes and requirements for them. HPC considered how the boxes would appear from the front walkway. The area near the chimney appears to be the best option for the two mounted boxes to allow for buffering. Mr. King agreed that the conduit can be mounted, under the siding near the foundation, and match the color of the house. This would allow more room to visually buffer the boxes from the street, perhaps with a large planter. The conduit from the mounted boxes up to the panels can be along the existing electrical wiring on the front corner of house. HPC and Mr. King agreed on this mounting solution.

Hearing no other questions, roll call to approve the application with the recommendation conduit and converter panels mounted close to existing chimney was taken. AYES: Mr. Golisano, Ms. Marlowe, Ms. Ryan, Mr. Szabo and Mr. Walsh. RECUSED: Mr. Banks and Ms. Suttmeier.

Mr. Walsh thanked Mr. King for taking time to discuss this project and being so prepared to address questions and concerns from the HPC.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Kilbride, Rail Road Historian, was invited to this meeting for discussion of Cranbury Station depot and rail road. Mr. Walsh welcomed him and explained that the HPC wanted to explore options for the depot structure. Mr. Kilbride stated that the Camden Amboy Railroad (C&ARR) was the first railroad in NJ and third in the country. In 1860, the C&ARR made improvements to this line because of the Civil War need to move more material and supplies. By 1871, the C&A leased the property to the Pennsylvania Railroad and at this point, the railroad could have been expanded. Maps of 1861 and 1876 list the station. The first major railroad fatality in the U.S. occurred in Cranbury, NJ near Brickyard Road. One of the riders injured was Commodore Vanderbilt and former president John Q. Adams was a rider on this train. Mr. Kilbride stated the whole right of way from East Windsor to Monroe was included in the NJ Historical District Study performed in June/July 2001 and that this entire railroad main line is a historic district.

The structure measures 80'L x 12'4"W outside dimension, height is not known. It was sided with vinyl siding sometime around 1988-1991. The siding can be removed but it is not known if some architectural details were removed during the install. Mr. Kilbride would be interested in the interior survey, determining interest level for Cranbury Station Hamlet (Cranbury & Monroe), and to find out possible usage of the structure.

Mr. Kilbride has experience with the National Registers of Historic Places application process and has offered to be of assistance. He stated that extensive details (16-18 pages) are required with the application process.

Mr. Kilbride was involved with the Hightstown Station move from a location south of the town to its permanent home now located on North Main Street in Hightstown just behind the East Windsor-Hightstown Historical Society building. The structure was originally 120'L but only a section could be physically moved.

He stated that only 40' was moved and is currently being used as an educational center. The parking space was needed on the south Hightstown property, so a firm paid for the move which was approximately 2 miles into the center of town. Having the moving costs covered was helpful and perhaps philanthropic 'friends' may be helpful for the Cranbury Station endeavor. The Hightstown Historical Society had the available land so it was moved there. The building, after the move, was housed on stilts for a very long time until money was raised for a foundation and shallow basement. The building also needed heating and plumbing. The two structures, Cranbury Station depot and Hightstown depot, are similar in architecture with Hightstown being a bit wider. Mr. Kilbride offered HPC a tour through the Hightstown depot and to help with filing forms for submission to the NJ State Historic Office.

Mr. Kilbride stated that if the Cranbury Station depot building has been secured, consideration to the structure should be given, relocated or moved, uses, condition, and perhaps to determine eligibility for National Historic Preservation. He stated that this is the only remaining structure of this type on the C&A line. Conrail removed some tracks just south of the turnpike underpass on Hightstown Cranbury Station Road. The rail line was originally built from Bordentown to South Amboy approx. 1834-34. The current owner is Conrail Shared Assets based in Mt. Laurel, NJ. Railroads have been an intricate part of the development of our country and no longer used; it would be fitting for reuse. There is enough length to make this a trail. The property owner should be consulted for what the future projection might be. It might be advantageous to reach out to Monroe Township HPC to possible partner with them for saving the Cranbury Station Depot. Incorporation into the existing C&ARR right of way (SHPO Opinion (ID#2970)) could be an easy avenue to preserve using the preservation protections of the rail line. An opinion of eligibility issued by the State Historic Preservation Officer and the opinion will have an effect on historic properties not listed on the National Register. The rail line was active to service the local business but whether it is currently active or not, is not known. The boundary lines between Cranbury and the surrounding towns were discussed.

Mr. Kilbride mentioned that stone sleepers on the rail line but they are approximately 1' down below ground level. He said these stones are indigenous of south Jersey. Stone sleepers are blocks of stone first used to hold the steel rail before wooden rail or concrete ties were found to be more suitable for the heavy loads and weight of the rail cars.

Mr. Banks referred to Chapter 93-3 about fact finding and designation of sites. He is aware the Governor recently signed a bill allocating funds for grants. He will explore what these funds would be used for. Since this is private property, property could generate a tax base for the town but this would need more investigation. It is in the by-laws to ask interested parties. Monroe Township and property owners could be interested. Mr. Banks will investigate the grant money situation. He is cognizant that other municipalities are aware of the grant funds and will be watching these funds. He stated that once the HPC determines what surveys are needed and the professionals required, funding would be the next step.

Ms. Spann stated that the Historian indicated the best first step is to come together as a group and decide if this is of value. Then a letter of intent will be written and discussed with the Township Committee. Ms. Spann stated that this topic has come up on the Master Plan Re-examination. A position will be needed by HPC on this. The property owner has not been spoken to about this acquisition and it is not known how or what the owner intends to do with property. What would the cost of the project, is this something the HPC wants to see come to fruition. The Zoning Committee would look at the actual practicality, what is the next step for HPC, where are we invested, what needs to be done and costs. HPC must decide if this project is of value.

Mr. Walsh stated that HPC discussed the houses on the Cranbury side be integrated into the Cranbury Historic District. Now that there is a historian to talk about the railroad structure Mr. Walsh suggested that the next meeting be dedicated to discussion and determining how to move forward with this.

Mr. Walsh suggested that the HPC agenda be dedicated as a work session to address and integrate the two discussions and take a position. Mr. Golisano stated this is the opportunity to outline any potential hurdles and follow up with Mr. Kilbride about the incorporation into the existing rail line Historic District and address the 2020 Master Plan update with regard to the Cranbury Stations Hamlet. Ms. Spann requested to be on the agenda for the Zoning Committee. She will bring ordinances that would impact this and then best prioritize.

Ms. Suttmeier asked what some of the questions the TC would ask of the HPC. Ms. Spann responded they would be environmental issues, cost, projection of costs and timeline, and usage of the structure. There is

not an urgency need but a letter of intent would be beneficial. She stated volunteers invest energy, time, efforts and their beliefs into the plan. She stated trust the work and move it forward.

Ms. Spann said there is nothing wrong with coming to the TC meeting and informing them the HPC is putting together information that HPC believes the TC will endorse. Grant opportunities will be investigated.

The HPC thanked Mr. Kilbride for taking the time to attend the meeting and talk about Cranbury Station and the rail line.

Mr. Walsh requested HPC to pencil their thoughts or vision for Cranbury Station/hamlet area. Ideally what the HPC would like; what the HPC would really like; and what would the HPC would accept? Think about resources and be ready for discussion. The ideas would be bullet pointed and drafted into a letter of intent. Ms. Spann also added thought of leaving or moving the structure; determine interest level, usage, and explain the building to the Zoning Committee.

Old Trenton Road house status was addressed by Ms. Marlowe. She explained that the next step is to get funding for this structure and in order for this structure to receive grant funds, it must be considered eligible on the State and/or National Historic Register list. However, a certificate of eligibility must be obtained which Ms. Marlowe is willing to move forward with. Ms. Marlowe asked if Township Committee could consider the Old Trenton Road house to be included within the historic district or as a separate building. Mr. Preiss would probably need to weigh in on this question as well.

MINUTES

The minutes from the February 4, 2020, meeting were reviewed with amendments. They will be placed on the March 4th agenda for review.

OLD BUSINESS

New Homeowner Letters: None sent.

2019 Year End Report will be presented to the Township Committee on February 24th at their meeting.

DISCUSSION

88 North Main Street appears to have replaced a larger window with a smaller window on the north side of the structure and is visible from the street. It was noted that a casement window was installed because the siding was removed, tar paper is exposed and the window opening looks smaller. An application has not been received for this project. Previously, the current owners were aware to submit an application to HPC about the work to the front porch roof. Secretary will look at the work project on this structure.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

There being no further business, a motion duly made by Mr. Walsh, seconded by Mr. Szabo and carried, the meeting was thereupon adjourned.

CERTIFICATE OF SECRETARY

I, undersigned, do hereby certify;

That I am the duly appointed secretary of the Cranbury Township Historic Preservation Commission and,

That the foregoing minutes of the Historic Preservation Commission, held on February 18, 2020 consisting of 2 pages, constitute a true and correct copy of the minutes of the said meeting.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name on this 5th day of May 2020.

Linda M. Scott, Recording Secretary