

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

TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING

The regular meeting of the Cranbury Township Historic Preservation Commission was held on October 6, 2020 at 7:00 pm by remote access videoconferencing in response to COVID-19 and the updated Open Public Meeting Act guidelines.

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Pursuant to the Sunshine Law, adequate notice in accordance with the Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6) was provided on December 16, 2019, of this meeting's date, time, and place, and the 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. Notification of remote access meetings going forward, until further notice, was posted on the Township website on July 3, 2020 and sent to the Trenton Times, Home News, and Cranbury Press on July 3, 2020.

CALL TO ORDER

With a quorum present, Mr. Walsh called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and Ms. Thompson performed as recording secretary.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. Golisano, Vice Chair; Ms. Marlowe; Ms. Ryan; Mr. Szabo; and, Mr. Walsh, Chair.

Motion was made and seconded to excuse Mr. Banks, 1st Alternate. Ms. Suttmeier, 2nd Alternate, was not in attendance.

NON-MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ms. Evelyn Spann, Township Liaison; Ms. Elizabeth Leheny, Principal, Phillips Preiss; Ms. Kathleen Moroldo, Monroe Resident; Mary Bosser, Cranbury Resident; Janice Mondoker, Cranbury Resident

OLD BUSINESS

Proposed Changes to the Historic District and Buffer Areas:

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) proceeded with discussion of the Proposed Amendment to the Cranbury Village Historic District and Buffer based on the two updated maps previously prepared by Mr. Richard Preiss reflecting the changes from the August 18, 2020 meeting. Discussion on October 6 focused on the next steps to be taken to advance the proposed changes, which include plotting the historic district and buffer changes on an official tax map of Cranbury Township. Such plotting will include points of interest noted in the September 15, 2020 HPC meeting minutes and emailed to Richard Preiss. Mr. Walsh, HPC Chair, will inform Mr. Preiss of Ms. Leheny's update, and Ms. Leheny will notify the HPC when the map is complete. This topic will be placed on an upcoming HPC agenda for discussion of next steps, including advancing the changes to the Township Committee.

For the benefit of the residents who were in attendance, Mr. Szabo clarified that references to the historic district refer specifically to the downtown area. The existing buffer is proposed for elimination, with the focus being shifted to the downtown streetscape. A buffer is proposed to be added to only the south side of Brainerd Lake, along Evans Drive, in order to manage the streetscape view from the Main Street dam.

Mr. Walsh added that the HPC wants to bring to closure the longstanding questions surrounding the existence and specific location of the buffer zone in the historic downtown area. Mr. Walsh noted further that there may be additional buffer zone issues pertaining to the Hamlet; however, those will be considered separately at a later time.

Cranbury Hamlet, Station Depot, Railway Update:

Ms. Leheny reported that she has all deeds to the Hamlet properties and will make those available to the HPC Secretary to distribute to the HPC members. Ms. Leheny reported also that some research has been completed on the statement of significance for the Hamlet area, and that she will coordinate with the HPC Secretary regarding access to additional in-house resources, bibliographies, etc. to advance her research. Ms. Leheny will also contact the NJ State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and provide an update by the week of October 12 in preparation for the October 20, 2020 HPC meeting. Ms. Leheny recommended moving forward with the historic district designation only and not including the Depot at this time.

Mr. Walsh noted that Jennifer Suttmeier has already posted a repository of information from a Hamlet resident with whom she is working. Mr. Walsh noted also that he, himself, has been working with Brian Scarpulla, another Hamlet resident, who has made available photos and deed information, and who has completed a historical designation form. Mr. Walsh will review the information and contact Mr. Scarpulla if additional information is needed.

During the discussion, it was noted that one Hamlet resident family has not been involved in the process thus far. The family was contacted and indicated that they have no objection to the proposed Hamlet historic district; however, they did not express an opinion about whether they want to be fully involved in advancing the designation. Discussion ensued regarding the most appropriate approach and best practice in terms of obtaining historical documentation for that family's house. Ms. Leheny noted that there are ways to gather such documentation and that the family need not be active participants in the process.

Discussion ensued regarding the required next steps after all deed information and historical documentation has been shared with the HPC. Ms. Leheny noted that there will need to be a public hearing before the HPC on the designation, with the list of properties and map to be published in advance in the newspaper. The HPC would then forward the proposed nomination for Hamlet historic district designation to the Planning Board. If accepted, the Planning Board would then revise the historical preservation element of the Township Plan to include the Hamlet and forward the revised Plan to the Township Committee. If accepted, Township Committee would then prepare a land development ordinance to include the Hamlet properties in the Township's historic district.

In response to a question about possible obstacles to advancing the Hamlet designation, Ms. Leheny noted that the HPC is proceeding in an appropriate manner and that a focus on the homes in the Hamlet is the clearest path. Since the Hamlet is a small district, securing the involvement of the homeowners is helpful. Ms. Leheny noted that Hamlet homeowners may speak at the public hearing and that, in her experience, township officials are more amenable to new initiatives if resident support exists. Overall, Ms. Leheny noted that she sees nothing objectionable in advancing this initiative.

Mr. Golisano noted is agreement with focusing on the Hamlet homes at this point; however, he noted also earlier discussions about advancing the Cranbury Station Depot on a parallel path with the Hamlet though not necessarily in the same action. This approach would keep the homes separate so as not to delay possible historic district designation of the Hamlet, while allowing consideration of the Depot to also continue to move forward. Ms. Leheny agreed that this parallel approach is possible, but consideration needs to be given as to how the Depot can be acknowledged and recognized in the most appropriate way. Recognition of the importance of the Depot may not be the same as recognition of the Hamlet for designation as a historic district. As such, the two issues should not be integrated so as to keep clear the differences in significance of each. It was agreed that both should be kept separate but addressed at the same time. Further, it was noted that the Rail Line and Depot are also different elements. Ms. Leheny said that this is certainly something that should be looked into further. Regarding the Depot, Ms. Leheny will contact the NJ SHPO to find out if it has already been designated on the state level as a historical site. She will share with the HPC her findings in this regard. Mr. Walsh asked if prior listing by the State would make it easier to secure local designation as a historic site. Ms. Leheny noted that such would not necessarily be the case. There is an honor associated with being designated on the state or national levels, but not necessarily with being designated on the local level since there are no local regulations governing identification of historic sites. Therefore, a homeowner may not object to state or national listing, but may object to local listing.

Some discussion ensued regarding ownership of the Chamberlin and Barclay property within the Hamlet, and the impact of that property on efforts to advance the Hamlet designation. It was noted that the property does not have an impact on current efforts to secure historic district designation for the Hamlet. Ms. Spann noted also that the Township Committee has been clear in its support of the Hamlet designation and that

the focus should remain on swift action in that regard. Mr. Walsh added that when the Chamberlin and Barclay property is purchased, a conversation can be had with the new owner at a future point in time. He reiterated Ms. Spann's sentiment that the focus must be on moving the Hamlet forward.

Mr. Walsh asked the HPC members if all were comfortable with the plan for moving forward with the Hamlet, and all agreed with the approach being taken. Mr. Walsh summarized next steps as follows: Ms. Leheny will provide the deed research on the Hamlet properties; the HPC will provide to Ms. Leheny the nomination documentation; and, Ms. Leheny will be scheduled to attend either the October 20 or November 17 meeting of the HPC. At that time, a determination will be made as to whether sufficient information has been gathered to advance the matter for Township Committee consideration.

As one final point, Mr. Golisano noted that he has archeological information from a 2001 Department of Transportation project relating to the Hamlet which he can provide to Ms. Leheny. Mr. Golisano will transfer that information through the HPC Secretary to Ms. Leheny.

New Homeowner Letters

Three new homeowner letters were sent to the addresses below following closings that occurred between August 11 and August 14, 2020:

67 North Main Street, Block 23, Lot 45.01
37 North Main Street, Block 23, Lot 55
36 Station Road, Block 18, Lot 20.02

1st Constitution Bank Windows:

Mr. Daniel Barbellio of 1st Constitution Bank submitted application HPC071-20 on September 28, 2020 for repair to the bank building as a result of a previous automobile accident which caused exterior structural damage. Given the extent of the damage and the need to secure the building as quickly as possible, the Bank undertook repair and restoration of the damaged areas, which included installation of a temporary window of a size smaller than the other windows. The temporary window will be replaced with one of the same size and appearance as all other windows on the building. Additionally, all other repairs to the exterior will conform in look and materials to the building as it was prior to the accident damage. The application was deemed ordinary/emergency repair and the work approved to proceed.

2020 Volunteer Term Dates:

Discussion continued from the September 15 HPC meeting regarding HPC membership. Mr. Walsh noted that Mr. Banks plans to resign from his 1st Alternate position with the HPC. Mr. Banks's current term as 1st Alternate will expire on December 31, 2021.

Mr. Szabo announced that he seeks to step down from his role as a regular voting member to assume the 1st Alternate position to be vacated by Mr. Banks. Mr. Szabo's current term will expire on December 31, 2020.

Ms. Suttmeier expressed an interest in assuming Mr. Szabo's role as a regular voting member. She serves currently as 2nd Alternate, the term for which will expire on December 31, 2021.

If the appointments are made as indicated above, the 2nd Alternate position will be vacant. However, emails have been received from residents interested in possible service on the HPC. Those residents will be approached at the appropriate time.

It is anticipated that these changes will take place in January following the Township Committee reorganization meeting. HPC membership is by mayoral appointment and, as such, proposed changes are recommendations only.

Book Purchases:

Mr. Golisano reported previously that he would provide recommendations for possible book purchases from the HPC's 2020 books budget line. At the October 6 meeting, he noted that someone else might also have a book suggestion and that he will provide the exact titles to the HPC Secretary within a week.

APPLICATIONS

HPC067-20, #55 North Main Street (B23, L50.01):

Mr. Golisano represented the applicants, Ms. Luliana and Mr., William Lako, and thus recused himself from voting on the application. A preliminary discussion of this application took place during the September 15, 2020 HPC meeting. Mr. Walsh noted that the building elements addressed in the application were approved in a previous application on February 5, 2019. Zoning approval for the work has also already received approval. It was noted also that no changes to this property will be visible from Main Street, though some will be visible from West Park Place.

Roll call was taken for approval of the submitted application: AYES: Ms. Marlowe, Ms. Ryan, Mr. Szabo, and Mr. Walsh.

NEW BUSINESS

HPC Certificate of Approval Application:

The Certificate of Approval application was updated with the contact information for the new HPC Secretary and posted on the Cranbury Township website.

Certified Local Government Grant:

The HPC Secretary reported that Certified Local Government grant applications are typically made available in October of each year for January 2021 submission. However, due to COVID, the application due date for 2020 was extended to January 2020 to May 2020. As such, it is unclear at this time whether the 2021 grant cycle will also be modified and attempts to secure updated information from the NJ SHPO have not yielded any clarifying information at this time. The HPC Secretary will continue to try to secure such information and will report back to the HPC. Mr. Walsh noted that thought will be given in the meantime as to how grant funds could be used.

MINUTES

The minutes from the September 15, 2020 meeting were reviewed. Three corrections to the minutes were noted: Mr. Banks's presence at the September 15 meeting was added, and two edits were made regarding HPC067-20 pertaining to the associated costs of customization and the installation of full screens on all windows.

Roll call to approve as amended: AYES: Mr. Golisano, Ms. Marlowe, Ms. Ryan, Mr. Szabo, and Mr. Walsh.

DISCUSSION

Three HPC Certificate of Approval applications were reported on, all of which were deemed ordinary maintenance/repair and approved to proceed:

- HPC068-20, #15 SoM, B35, L6, was received on September 17, 2020 for repair of rotted sections of second floor and porch soffits on the front façade with like materials (wood).
- HPC069-20 #50 NoM, Block 32, Lot 2, was received on September 24, 2020 for restoration/replacement of rotted wood fascia and molding under existing aluminum fascia, as well as the drip edge, of front porch roof. This will restore the home's look prior to application of aluminum and will better match other homes in the Cranbury historic district. Similar work was completed on the front roof, which was also deemed ordinary maintenance/repair at that time by HPC.
- HPC070-20, #111 NoM, B25, L29.01, was received on September 24, 2020 to repave existing macadam with same material, same size; received Zoning approval on September 27, 2020.

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, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I am the duly appointed secretary of the Cranbury Township Historic Preservation Commission, and that this document, consisting of four (4) pages, constitutes a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular meeting held on October 6, 2020.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name on this ____day of October 2020.

Lori Thompson
Recording Secretary
Historic Preservation Commission