

Minutes
Mt Lebanon Historic Preservation Board
Monday March 24, 2014. 5 p.m.
Mt Lebanon Municipal Building

Attendance: Yvette Yescas, chair; Joel Cluskey, vice-chair, Bill Callahan, Michelle Zmijanac, Jim Martin, Ben Wetmore, John Bendel, commission liaison; Susan Morgans, staff liaison, Keith McGill, municipal planner

Call to Order: Chair Yvette Yescas called meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Citizen Comment: There was no citizen comment.

Consideration of Minutes: February minutes were unanimously approved.

Chair's Report:

—Yvette Yescas thanked former member Bonnie VanKirk for her six years on the board and also for serving as a strong advocate for historic preservation during her term on the Commission.

Commission/Staff Liaison Reports: Due to the one-hour time limit for this meeting and its specific purpose, there was no commission or staff report.

Topic of Month: Virginia Manor

Dr. Philip Pollice spoke on behalf of the group of Virginia Manor residents who would like to pursue a local historic designation for their subdivision. The residents present were: Gerry Dudley, Jackie Dudley, Phil Pollice, Susan Bicket, Helen Billak, Carol Oxenreiter, Jan Bleier, Rocky Bleier, Joe Smith and Lynn Smith. Pollice said the interested residents embrace change that needs to be made in order to accommodate modern families, but they believe change needs to be made sensitively, not in order to impose will, but to preserve value. He noted that the original Virginia Manor covenants pertaining to architecture— basically requiring that all construction needed approval by official architect Tom Garman and two other architects— expired in 2000. The residents would like to get back to that original spirit of encouraging architectural/artistic merit and preserving historic significance, and they would like the historic preservation board's help.

Pollice said that of Virginia Manor's 300 households, a good portion of homeowners are in favor of something, but they are not sure what. The biggest challenge is educating people, he said, because those who are uninformed may feel that an ordinance could be too restrictive. Susan Morgans said that the Commission would probably want a more concrete example of resident support.

Helen Billak suggested that a plan to preserve Virginia Manor could be a model for other neighborhoods.

A discussion followed regarding whether it makes better sense to pursue a zoning overlay or to request designation as a local historic district governed by a HARB. Mr. McGill described some of the issues that a zoning overlay might pose and indicated that it could be a lengthy process. Bill Callahan explained how pursuing local historic designation works. The group decided to request the latter.

Bill Callahan suggested that a good way to start would be to adopt the Secretary of the Interior's guidelines, which are very similar to the Shaker Heights, OH, ordinance that the Virginia Manor residents said they like.

The group decided that the next step should be a meeting for Virginia Manor residents attended by several historic preservation board members and Commissioner Bendel. Susan Morgans suggested Bower Hill Church as a possible location.

Bill Callahan moved that, "the historic preservation board work with Virginia Manor neighbors to host a public information meeting regarding pursuance of preservation management tools as per Mt. Lebanon's Comprehensive Plan recommendation." Callahan also moved that, the historic preservation board participate with Virginia Manor residents in a Commission meeting about local districts as a possible preservation management tool." Michelle Zmijanac seconded both motions. The motions passed unanimously.

The residents will look into holding the information session on May 1 at Bower Hill Church.

Other Business:

There was no other business

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:15. Next meeting is the April 24 National Register public outreach session at 6 p.m. in the Commission Chambers.