

Minutes
Mt Lebanon Historic Preservation Board
Monday September 15, 2014. 5 p.m.
Mt Lebanon Municipal Building

Attendance: Yvette Yescas, chair; Joel Cluskey, vice-chair, Bill Callahan, Michelle Zmijanac, Jim Martin, Anna Siefken, Ben Wetmore, Susan Morgans, staff liaison.

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

Citizen Comment: No citizen comment

Consideration of Minutes: August minutes were approved unanimously with three changes.

Chair's Report: Yvette Yescas said the National Park Service had Mt. Lebanon's National Register Nomination as of August 15, and board should have official notification by October 3.

Susan Morgans noted that that the some people think \$25,000 allocated to the historic preservation board from the 2014 fund balance is for a consultant to decide whether or not the creation of a historic district would be advisable. Yvette clarified that the \$25,000 is for a consultant to draft an ordinance and design guidelines for the proposed Virginia Manor historic district. The Commission would then vote on the ordinance.

Staff Liaison Report: Susan Morgans talked with Planner Keith McGill about the procedure the Planning Board follows when making a formal recommendation. Keith says the Planning Board sends a letter to the Commission. This is what the Historic Preservation Board should also do.

Commission Liaison Report: No report

Continuing Business:

Brick Streets: The board expressed concern/confusion about PennDOT's plans to resurface Castle Shannon Boulevard. It appears that the decision to use asphalt has been made with the consent of the municipality, yet there has been no response to the historic preservation board's request of last month that other alternatives, including repair of the existing brick, be explored. Yvette Yescas will talk with John Bendel. Bill Callahan will talk with PennDOT and, if appropriate, write a letter expressing the board's disappointment that the state historic preservation code, which requires an attempt to avoid, mitigate or minimize the impact on historic surroundings, has not been followed.

Although neither Rae Avenue nor Castle Shannon Boulevard are typical "brick street policy" cases, the board expressed concern that the way these streets are

treated could set precedent. Moving forward, they would like to see the “replacing brick with brick when possible” policy formalized. Yvette Yescas will ask Commissioner Bendel to clarify whether he hopes to look into how other towns do brick roads himself or if he wants the board to do that research.

Taping of Meetings: Anna Siefken asked the board to revisit the benefits/downsides of taping board meetings. A lengthy discussion ensued with members acknowledging the public’s right to know about government functions but also expressing concerns about privacy of residents, a potential negative impact on board recruitment and the impact on board dynamics. *The board voted unanimously (with Jim Martin abstaining) to send a letter to the commission requesting that historic preservation boards meetings not be videotaped because: there should be a balance between transparency and the open discussion of issues; taping changes the interaction of the board; there is no Commission policy (indicating why some boards are taped and others aren’t), and there are privacy issues.*

Topic of the Month: Bill Callahan gave a PowerPoint presentation on historic districts.

Topic for Next Month: RFP for consultant

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.. Next meeting is Monday, October 20, at 6 p.m. in the municipal building.