

Minutes
Mt Lebanon Historic Preservation Board
Monday, March 16, 2015, 5 p.m.
Mt Lebanon Municipal Building

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

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Yvette Yescas called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

CITIZENS COMMENTS There were no citizen comments.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES The December minutes were unanimously approved.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Yvette Yescas reported on the selection of T&B consulting for the Virginia Manor design guidelines and proposed ordinance
Yvette also reported on the invitations that have been sent regarding the workshop on tax credits available to income-producing property owners. There is time to invite a few more people. Susan Morgans will contact the AIA and if an invitation might be included in their weekly e-newsletter. Anna will forward an invitation to members of the Green Building Alliance.

The board hopes that the chief inspector will attend the workshop so that he is aware of the program and can, as appropriate advise people who are remodeling about tax credit opportunities.

She will talk with Commercial District Manager Eric Milliron about putting a Q & A on the website explaining the tax credit program.

STAFF LIAISON REPORT

Susan Morgans passed out a list of locations where Mt. Lebanon entry signs currently are located for the board to consider in making future decisions about National Register signage.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Yvette Yescas nominated and Anna Siefken seconded a motion that Joel Cluskey be chair and Michelle Winowich-Zmijanac be vice chair for the coming year. They were elected unanimously. Yvette will continue to lead the Virginia Manor project. Ben Wetmore will take over Joel's former role as liaison to the economic development council. Joel has been asked to serve on the Mt. Lebanon Partnership board.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Tax Credit Workshop/National Register Celebration

Response to the invitation has been good—we should exceed our original goal of 30 people, and most major property owners have responded.

Bill Callahan will talk with Scott Doyle about how Jonathan Hill should be involved in the presentation.. Michelle will call Jonathan and let him know what is planned.

Joel will bring the screen; Bill will bring his projector and laptop. We will have on display maps of the district, copies of the National Register Nomination and the certificate we received.

Bill suggested we have a sign-in sheet and then follow up with a 5-question email survey.

Plans are all set for the reception that will follow.

Historic Designation Signs

Ben Wetmore presented a first draft of the sort of sign that might designate entrances to National Register neighborhoods. He suggested that individual homeowners might purchase complementary signs. Ben is getting some pricing on signs. Bill Callahan says it is unlikely signs would be funded by a PHMC grant. Susan Morgans suggested there might be a possibility of a county tourism grant.

Bill Callahan said the historical society can do things the municipality can't and suggested it might be interested in applying to the PHMC for a blue state historical marker that could be placed in a visible spot such as Mt. Lebanon Park or in front of the Municipal Building. At the next meeting, we will talk about partnership opportunities between our two organizations and consider appointing a liaison from the HPB to the Historical Society.

Susan Morgans reminded the board that they would need a cost figure by mid-summer if a request for signs is to be considered for 2016 budget. Bill Callahan noted that way finding signs are important—a historic designation alone does not draw visitors.

OTHER BUSINESS

Tax Abatement

Jim Martin asked if Mt. Lebanon could do property tax abatement for residential properties in the historic district that make improvements consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's design guidelines for rehabilitation.

Thirty-nine states offer such tax abatements, said Bill Callahan, who recommended Mt. Lebanon do this by creating a LERTA district. Susan suggested that if the board is committed to this, it should become part of the long-range plan.

Certified Local Government

Bill Callahan said that if we get the local historic district for Virginia Manor, the next step would be to become a certified local government, which, would make us eligible for \$15,000 matching grants (match can be cash or time) from the PHMC. Anna Siefken volunteered to research this.

Thanks to Bill Callahan

The board thanked Bill, who is leaving the board, for his exceptional service. Joel Cluskey called working with Bill “a great experience from a professional development standpoint.” Yvette Yescas said, “This town would not be where we are without you.” Bill will continue to receive the HPB agenda and minutes, as he will stay involved through his position with the PHMC.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:55. Next meeting is Monday, April 20 at 5 p.m. in the municipal building.

Adjournment and next meeting

The meeting adjourned a 6:30. The next meeting is Monday, March 16, at 5 p.m. at the municipal building.