

Minutes

Mt Lebanon Historic Preservation Board

Monday, March 15, 2016, 5 p.m., Mt Lebanon Municipal Building

Attendance: Joel Cluskey, chair; Michelle Zmijanac, vice chair; Ben Wetmore, Jonathan Hill, Yvette Yescas, John Bendel, commission liaison; Susan Morgans, staff liaison. **Absent:** Anna Siefken, Jim Martin

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

CITIZENS COMMENTS There was no citizen comment

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES The February minutes were approved unanimously.

LIAISON REPORTS

Commissioner: Commissioner John Bendel said that when the board reports to the Commission, Commissioners will want to know what the HPB plans to do with the voluntary guidelines for Virginia Manor and the board's response to the brick streets mitigation plan prepared by PennDOT. He noted that the bids for replacing the brick on a portion of Morrison—the only brick replacement scheduled for 2016—came back four times higher than asphalt, so the Commission will need to discuss a course of action, as only \$55,000 is appropriated for brick street restoration each year. He said the Commission also will want to hear about the historic house medallions. With a meeting with PennDOT still to come on brick street mitigation and other issues still to be discussed, Mr. Bendel agreed that the HPB should ask that their scheduled presentation on March 28 be postponed to provide more time to prepare. Susan Morgans will discuss this with Manager McGill.

Mr. Bendel mentioned that Wildcat Field will be renamed in honor of Clint Seymour, a former Mt. Lebanon ballplayer who was tragically killed. This required a substantial commitment for field improvements from the foundation that memorializes Seymour. Because the field has some historic significance, Mr. Bendel suggested that when the it is renamed, its historic significance might be acknowledged in some way.

He also noted that according to the new municipal naming rights policy, the naming of the field will not be in perpetuity.

Staff: Susan Morgans suggested that since the HPB did not apply for a Keystone Grant this year, it would be a good idea to have an idea for a grant application next year, as Mt. Lebanon has had good success in getting these grants in the past.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Economic Development: Ben Wetmore will send a copy of the strategic plan for Washington Road to the board members.

Brick Streets: Yvette Yescas cannot attend the PennDOT meeting but Joel Cluskey will attend. Joel and Susan will coordinate prior to the meeting. A discussion on how the municipality deals with brick streets followed. The board is concerned that if Morrison Drive—one of the streets PennDOT’s mitigation plan ranks high on the list for retention—is surfaced with asphalt, there is little hope of retaining any of the brick streets that homeowners believe add character and value to their neighborhoods. Michelle Zmijanac pointed out that the cost difference over 50 years is not much. John Bendel said that for the Commission, the issue is whether preserving brick is worth it, even though there is no significant difference in the long run, when the initial cost is so high. Susan Morgans wondered if a real estate agent might be able to quantify the difference between housing prices on brick versus asphalt streets and if it is possible to find a contractor who only does brick, since the typical street subcontractors do not. Jonathan Hill wondered if we could identify and contact any cities that have committed to brick retention and restoration.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Historic markers/signage The Historical Society is moving forward with the sale of the markers. The municipal solicitor is working on trademarking the design.

Ben Wetmore suggested there might be something we could add to existing street signs that shows our historic designation.

John Bendel clarified that some signs are the responsibility of the historic preservation board and others are part of a larger discussion that should include the HPB. He said the HPB needs to pick its next area of focus and everything that is done with signage needs to be consistent.

Susan Morgans will check to see if any money was allocated in the 2016 municipal budget for signage.

OTHER BUSINESS

Preservation Zoning The board will ask to speak with former member Bill Callahan regarding preservation zoning, as it seems that is the best way to enable Mt. Lebanon history to be sustained and preserved.

ADJOURNMENT The meeting adjourned at 6:15. The next meeting is Monday, April 18, at 6 p.m.