

Minutes

Mt Lebanon Historic Preservation Board

Monday, July 17, 2017, Mt Lebanon Municipal Building

ATTENDANCE Present: Yvette Yescas, chair; Jonathan Hill, Michelle Winowich-Zmijanac, Ben Wetmore, Jim Martin, Joe Bevins, John Bendel, commission liaison; Susan Morgans, staff liaison **Absent:** Anna Siefken,

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

CITIZENS COMMENTS There was no citizen comment.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES May minutes were approved with one change.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Ben Wetmore has resigned from the board but will stay through August. Ben was on the ad hoc committee that founded the board. He has been instrumental in design projects for the current board, including the design of the historic medallions.

If anyone knows someone who is interested, please have them send in their application promptly. John Bendel says the Commission would be interested in a recommendation for the skill set that is needed.

COMMISSION LIAISON REPORT

Commissioner Bendel reported that when the Commission looked at the mid-year, unallocated fund-balance, he recommended that the budget for brick street maintenance be doubled from \$90,000 to \$180,000, but no other commissioner was interested. This gives some perspective on where current commissioners stand on brick streets.

Mr. Bendel suggested that perhaps Rudy Sukal could bring the contractor who currently does brick streets maintenance in to discuss issues with brick streets. There remains the possibility that brick streets could be bid separately, but no opportunity has presented itself yet, as

the only brick work done this year was the previously scheduled maintenance on Morrison.

Susan Morgans wondered about the difference between the Dormont project and the Grant Street project. The Grant pavers are true clay brick and have lasted about 25-30 years but got an overhaul last year. It might be interesting to know how much the overhaul cost.

STAFF LIAISON REPORTS

Susan Morgans will connect Yvette Yescas with planning board member Susie Sieber regarding having annual meetings between the two boards. This practice, which once happened regularly but has not taken place recently, would permit the historic preservation board to have more opportunity to provide input, particularly with projects that might have an impact on the historic district.

Susan said there is a resurgence of interest in the arboretum project, which is good because maintaining the landscape is an important part of historic preservation. The parks board is preparing a grant application that would certify Mt. Lebanon as an arboretum, based on meeting various specifications.

Susan suggested that in conjunction with the planned revisions of the Virginia Manor voluntary design guidelines for use by the entire community, there might be an opportunity to offer one-on-one advice to people considering additions, tear-downs, etc. The Design Center Pittsburgh used to provide design consults, but we ended that partnership several years ago.

Jim Martin suggested that, since the voluntary design guidelines apply only to infill construction, a resource is needed for people considering additions. Jonathan Hill suggested a webpage with links to resources. Jon and Joe Bevins will review the historic preservation board webpage and recommend changes. Ben Wetmore suggested that when the page is done, the board could sponsor an event where people could talk to experts in person about their remodeling plans.

Historical Society of Mt. Lebanon

Michelle Zmijanic said 102 letters have been sent promoting the sale of historic medallions to homeowners of contributing properties in the

historic district. This effort will be evaluated in September, as mailing to all properties in the district would be expensive. Michelle would like to distribute information about medallions to realtors. Susan Morgans said the public information office could design a letter/flier, if the historical society would like.

Economic Development Council

No report

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Design Guidelines

The board will spend the fall/winter simplifying the design guidelines and then in the spring will promote the guidelines and any other helpful resources regarding good design they have identified. A workshop remains a possibility. Jonathan Hill, Joe Bevins and Susan Morgans will help Yvette look at the guidelines.

John Bendel reminded the board they it can ask other qualified people in the community to help with labor-intensive projects, so individual board members do not take on too many tasks.

Brick Streets

Susan Morgans will ask Rudy Sukal to address issues with brick streets at the September meeting. Ben Wetmore will continue to research how long brick streets can last and will have information in August. Susan Morgans will get map of brick streets map from IT.

Historic Makers and Signs

Jonathan Hill did not re-contact the state regarding submitting another application for the blue historical marker. The board concurred that it makes better sense to have a sign made, using one of the companies the state recommended. Project is in the preliminary stage now; board probably will take this year to make a plan and then request funding for the sign/signs for 2019.

Notebook Review

Joe Bevins has begun reviewing the board member notebook. Susan suggested the notebook might be transformed into an e-document with current information scanned.

OTHER BUSINESS

Yvette asked board members to let John Bendel know if anyone they recommend submits an application to the board.

Jim Martin asked if the ongoing tear-down in Virginia Manor is an opportunity to raise awareness about historic preservation. Susan Morgans said there will be an article in the September magazine clarifying what is required for a teardown. She said their research shows that teardowns are not “trending.” There have only been a handful over the past few years, and most have not been architecturally significant.

A brief discussion took place about street trees. Susan Morgans will send everyone the Mt. Lebanon Magazine article from the current issue regarding how public works handles street trees. If questions still remain, board can ask someone from public works to come to a meeting to talk about trees.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting is Monday, August 21, at 5 p.m. in the municipal building.

ADJOURNMENT The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.